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Unto heights heroic

Unto Heights Heroic

(A Biblical Interpretation)

By

Gardner S. Eldridge

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TO THE MEMORY OF MY
MOTHER

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INTRODUCTION

"Amid all the mysteries by which we are surrounded nothing is more certain than that we are ever in the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed."—*H. Spencer.*

"As a matter of history, the existence of a quasi-human God has always been a postulate."—*John Fiske.*

"He seems to hear a heavenly Friend
And through thick veils to apprehend
A labor working to an end."—*Tennyson.*

INTRODUCTION

HAVING once admitted the principles of the Reformation, it is inevitable that the Bible should become a storm center of controversy. For individualism is in its essence antagonistic to uniformity. It is impossible to inclose any number of thinking men within the circle of one idea, unless they abandon their thinking.

"For every fiery prophet in old times,
And all the sacred madness of the bard,
When God made music through them, could but speak
His music by the framework and the chord."

Allowance must always be made for "the framework and the chord."

But this very difficulty of identical thought and expression is a prime factor in human progress. For the value of controversy is not simply the victory of one party over the other. The main value is in the controversy itself; through it the vision is enlarged.

The psalmist prayed, "Open thou mine eyes,

that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." This prayer is being answered through the conflict of biblical study. The eyes of man are opening wider and wider upon the book of God. From being a mere storehouse of proof texts open only to the theologian for dogma building, it is rapidly becoming the book of God open to the heart of man for life building.

I know many people think the book in jeopardy—that the foundations of our faith are being undermined. Then possibly we need to lay the foundations deeper. We ought neither to suspect the Bible of insecurity in itself, nor the critics of rendering it so, unless we first make sure that our faith is resting upon the real foundations of the book.

It is one of the principles of life that we be constantly making our way through the transient toward the permanent; through the relative toward the absolute; through the guesses of man toward the truth of God. The same principle holds in the study of the Bible. A revelation in its essence is not what we find, but what comes to us; what is constantly and increasingly coming; what is revealed, and forever *being* revealed. The revelation, then, is always larger than our grasp of it.

Now, as a matter of fact the revelation of God to this world—that is, the revealing of God's life to the world through the Bible—is not and cannot be disturbed. Only grant the existence of God, a being from whom all things proceed, a being who is forever expressing himself through the whole universe, and this wonderful book will easily take its place as the noblest expression he has ever made of himself.

The controversy, as a rule, does not deal with revelation in this larger sense, but has to do with the material through which it comes. It is engaged in analyzing, in adjusting and readjusting, that material. It deals with the form rather than the spirit.

Forms are transient, spirit permanent. We are making our way through the one toward the other. The constant passing of forms is the pathos of progress. Why, then, be so hasty in charging the critics with having stolen away our Master because the familiar form has disappeared? Lingering at the empty tomb with John a larger truth may dawn, and still lingering with the loving Mary the Master himself may speak.

But all this urging in upon the heart of the book is the urgency of life itself. We cannot

rest in our Scripture searching, for somehow we are impelled by the conviction that life lies in here. As Jesus said of the Jews, "Ye search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life."

It is but the struggle for life, eternal life, old as our humanity. It is the spirit of man striving into the presence of God: "For this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God." There may be much vague groping, and many a wild plunge on the part of our thinking. It may be a strange Faust-like career, yet the urging thirst, the articulate cry, is that of the Pilgrim, "Life, life, eternal life!"

Every time we have come more closely into the presence of God there has been a breaking up of many time-honored traditions. It was true of the Reformation in reference to the Church. Men cried out against the seeming vandalism. And when the Church emerged it was stripped of many forms that had been sacredly cherished. Yet it was more than ever a living Church. We had not lost, but gained. All was in the interest of the individual approach to God; of a deeper experience; of a stronger spiritual life, a better and mightier

Church. It is the ever-recurring struggle of God and man to come into more spiritual relations. It is the passion of communion—of that fellowship which is life itself.

But the question may be honestly raised as to whether the Bible is really taking on the more vital forms—whether it be coming into shape for the deeper spiritual nourishment of the soul and the larger influencing of the world; whether the eager spirit of man is really turning biblical interpretation into the more available, palatable, and spiritual food of life.

The chief complaint is that the book is being humanized, that the supernatural is being driven into the background. Well, there is in this universe nothing more supernatural than God, and next to him nothing more supernatural than man. Carlyle has made this clear enough. Now, in the age-long struggle of the imperfect personality of man to rise into the perfect personality of God through intercourse and communion, who shall say that in the presence of these personal forces there shall not be experiences and events that shall transcend the natural order?

But in common with all other phenomena

these experiences and events are a legitimate subject for critical study. Suppose, then, that some things we once thought supernatural are now shown in the larger vision to be natural, is God any the less the author? Does it prove that God is no longer the author of an event simply because we have an inkling of how it came to pass? There is a natural supernaturalism in which "we live, move, and have our being." The more we cherish it the nobler must life become, God in our life becoming the rule, and not the exception.

Or suppose the scientific investigator, with the mania of explaining things upon him, carry the process too far, as he certainly does sometimes. Suppose he leave no room for an unknown quantity, how long can he maintain such a position? He can no more analyze and explain the life of Moses without the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Person from whom that life proceeds than Herbert Spencer can analyze and explain the universe without the presence of his "Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed."

But if the book is becoming more human is it therefore becoming less divine? There is nothing in the world so much like God as our

humanity. This the Bible itself teaches. Therefore, the more human the book the more perfectly will it reveal God.

Now, what is really taking place in the present-day interpretation of the Bible? If we take up the books that are rapidly coming to hand, the books that are to help us into the deeper meaning of God's life in the Bible, what do we find? Such books as these: *The Life and Literature of the Hebrew People, History and Government, Ethics and Religion, The Social Life, The Epic of the Inner Life, Literature of the Old Testament, The Messages of the Prophets, Literary Study of the Bible.*

These are the commentaries of to-day. And what is their significance? Just this, that in place of, or in addition to, the former textual interpretation in the light of our theology, we have historical, ethical, social, religious, poetic, and literary interpretation, in the light of the whole dramatic sweep of human existence. And this is equivalent to saying that it is in the light of that Spirit of God who is the Master of the world's progress.

Is not this a gain? Is it not getting beyond the cramped letter into the presence of the thing itself? Is not this passing between the

lines into the very atmosphere of that divine-human communion of which the Bible is a faithful record? Is not this getting hold of that communion at its vital centers, at those points at which its principles must radiate into the multitudinous interests of man? Suppose, instead of an oracle from the lips of David that gives us a world of trouble, we pass beyond the letter into the relation that exists between God and the man, how much broader, deeper, surer a standpoint from which to interpret the truth at issue.

In our interpretations, then, we are coming into the universal language of the soul, that utters itself in relations rather than words. And so we are gaining, in the place of a dead, a living language. Books once sealed to us are being unlocked and their present-day value realized.

The time has come indeed for passing on from the questions of "higher criticism" into a realm yet higher, that may be characterized as "higher appreciation"—the legitimate sequence of all criticism. We wait the genius to-day. We wait the creative masters—the man who can make the lofty figures, the mighty events, live again with a glory born of the increasing

light, and the genius of the man, such as no former interpretation has achieved.

But the "higher appreciation" of what, of whom? Why, of God! Is not this the whole meaning of life, to appreciate God? Is not this worship, praise, and service?—to appreciate God, to enter more and more into the significance of his life, deeper and deeper into its meaning.

And this must come through a revelation; through those things wherein he expresses himself; through the testimony of "that which appears." We are thankful to Herbert Spencer that he finds in nature a testimony to the "Infinite and Eternal Energy." For energy has its place in the life of man. We are still more thankful to John Fiske that he finds in history a testimony to a "Quasi-Human God." For we have a yet deeper need for such a God.

But we await a better testimony. All nature and all history taken together does not constitute a Bible. We need a revelation that will bring God into life in some creative way. For the infinite need of man is not simply life, but a "new life;" not something built or evolved from the past, but from the future. For we are made for progress; and not only for progress, but we

have laid upon us the strange heroic task of passing from one world into another—not at death, but now and here: from a world of necessity into a world of freedom; from a natural world into a world of grace—grace of God and grace of man; from a world of things and laws into a world of personalities and relations. There is not only a "struggle for life" and a "struggle for the life of others," but there is a "struggle for the *new* life," and a "struggle for the *new* life of others." All the meaning of human progress is involved in the last two struggles. Man has laid upon him the superhuman task of making himself, of finding the larger, diviner meaning of the soul through some "Divine Hero" of our moral and spiritual nature. And such a Hero the Bible reveals. In the prophecy of Isaiah the name "Hero-God" is employed. But more important than the name is the fact itself throughout the Bible.

Everywhere throughout this divine-human drama God appears as the Hero-God. Everywhere men and events, history, literature, and life, rise into heroic proportions only in his presence. What a book, then, for life!—for the life of to-day, when the crying need of the hour is the strong, heroic life; when we are in such

danger of becoming victims of facility and luxury; when the heroic task is laid upon us of mastering the old world, that has grown into infinite proportions through the same Hero-God who has proven himself master of Literature, History, and Life throughout the age-long witnessing of the Bible.

The attempt, then, that follows in these pages is to sketch in a brief, and I fear crude, manner the biblical philosophy of Literature, History, and Life—how all are evolved through the Hero-God; how through this literature he leads toward the higher vent of life; how life itself is evolved through the meeting of the Hero, and redeemed through the companionship of his revelation; how history finds its progressive principle in him; how the world moves forward through the personal unfoldment of man through the personal Hero; and how, in its last analysis, the whole destiny of man hinges upon the individual relation of man to the Hero. Thus coming to the individual life, how that life makes its way through the voices to an experience with the personal Hero, finds its mission in his presence, and finally achieves it through the dynamics of God—the divine Hero in his redeeming passion; and how Jesus

of Nazareth proved himself, and unto this day is proving himself, master of Literature, History, and Life.

If this outline be true we have another glimpse into the noble vitality of the Bible; into its far-reaching purpose and power; into its unique and unrivaled place in the life of man. Yes, another glimpse into that great fact, that this ancient book has alone kept pace with the progress of man; has never been thrown off the scent; that it has ever held, and still holds, the secret of human development.

I am conscious of having touched with unskilled hands themes that far transcend my powers.

> "For more's felt than is perceived,
> And more's perceived than can be interpreted,
> And Love strikes higher with his lambent flame
> Than Art can pile the fagots."

LITERATURE

The Book of Books

"No skeptic he who bold essays
T' unravel all the mystic maze
Of the Creator's mighty plan—
A task beyond the powers of man,
Who, when his reason fails to soar
High as his will, believes no more—
No!—calmly through the world he steals,
Nor seeks to trace what God conceals,
Content with what that God reveals."

—*Tennyson.*

"I press God's lamp
Close to my breast—its splendor, soon or late,
Will pierce the gloom."—*Browning.*

THE BOOK OF BOOKS

"The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end."—Eccles. xii, 11, 12.

THE author of Ecclesiastes discusses the problem of life, and closes the discussion by warning us against the attempt to solve the problem by a book. "Of making many books there is no end." The last book can never be written, the last word never uttered.

It is said that Victor Hugo used to walk by the seashore and throw off poetry from his rugged soul in response to old Ocean's mysterious call. Man is ever walking by the shore of an infinite sea, from whose depths voices are calling, and the response is book on book. "Of making many books there is no end." Of course all books are not the product of infinite mystery, but all great books are. They seem like a fruitless labor, a vain attempt to do the impossible. But in reality they have a divine mission, and our author presents that mission in a most striking and picturesque form. "The words of the wise are as goads," with which you spur the flock forward. And "they are like

nails"—or spikes—with which you pitch your tent from night to night. Both are given by the same shepherd.

We have here a picture of life's progress—a flock spurred on by goads, while each day's advance is held by driving stakes and pitching tents. It is a picture of the two great principles of life, the progressive goad and the conservative stake, the goad of progress, the spirit of adventure, the promise of life.

> "By a mighty impulse driven,
> By a voice of mystic strength,
> 'Go,' it cries; 'to thee is given
> Happiness to find at length.'"

Then there is the conservative stake, the stake driven by our fathers. Around it cluster holy associations, dreams of the night, toils of the day, visions of God. It is sometimes very hard to strike those sacred tents.

Some books are "goads," and some are "stakes;" great books are both goads and stakes, given by the same shepherd. They revere the past while making for the future. "They come not to destroy, but to fulfill."

The book of Ecclesiastes has served diverse ends. One man, missing entirely its literary genius, culls from it a lot of sparkling texts and

out of them builds strange systems of theology. Another one, equally blind to its literary form, characterizes it as the pessimistic wailings of a disappointed voluptuary. As well treat Tennyson's "In Memoriam" in a similar fashion by making it the basis of theology, or casting it aside as the wailings of disappointment. Indeed, we shall best grasp the significance of Ecclesiastes, perhaps, in the light of this modern poem.

In the English poem we have a great sorrow-riven soul, keenly sensitive to the thought of his age, its problems and perplexities, its questions, its misgivings, its hopes and fears. At times it sinks almost to the minor key of faith, then rises grandly to the major, and finally emerges in sight of the "far-off divine event." In the Hebrew poem we have also a great soul, equally sensitive to the thought of his age, to all its puzzling questions, its fascinating theories of life, its allurements and ambitions, its aims and philosophies. At times he is almost engulfed by them, but finally emerges in sight of the whole "duty of man"—the supreme goal.

The book sparkles with philosophy, poetry, and maxims, but its great value is not in these.

It is in its unseen goal, its ideal. And its power is in its movement, its trend toward that goal. This is the great value of books—not what they say, but what they suggest, where they lead. A book is a fragment struggling for completion. And that "struggle" coupled with the character of the goal is its pith and power.

Our author seeks life in the world. That world appears to him in three forms: pleasure, wisdom, and affairs—to feel, to know, to possess. He rings the changes on these three forms of life. He seeks life as a votary of pleasure. He plucks the nearest, then the next, and the next as an ox crops grass across a field with no thought of what he is or where he is going. The venture is a failure—"all is vanity."

Then he seeks life as a votary of knowledge. He adds fact to fact according to certain modern methods. But when he sums up his facts he gets no kind of livable world. The result is chaos, not cosmos. Something more than mere addition enters into the making of a world for man to live in.

Finally he seeks life as a votary of affairs, and adds thing to thing, house to house. He is a man with a hoe, a very large hoe—the other man with a hoe whose brow grows not

more "slanting," but whose heart grows more pinched and bedwarfed. And again this life-seeker's refrain is, "Vanity of vanities."

Now suppose the quest end here. Suppose this complete the book. The result is not life but vanity, simply because an attempt has been made to crowd the whole into a part; all of life into one phase; man into an idea; the boundless into boundaries. Houses have been built with great pains and toil and care, one of pleasure, another of business, and another of knowledge, and, behold, not one of them is big enough to hold the man who built it. "Surely this is vanity." This is the folly of the purely realistic book, the book that attempts to give us life by marking its boundaries.

Life, they say, is made of facts, things, feelings, etc. Now let the artistic spirit move upon them, and, behold, we have a book; yes, a book disclosing the artistic glory of its maker, but in it no room for the maker himself. His own soul, unless dead, will beat against its boundaries; will see the day when its very artistic beauty will pall upon the heart that is crying out for life. It simply does not give the higher vent to life. This is its folly. For real life is just this, that it is forever and forever seeking

the higher vent, the open road of God, the hill country of the soul. And all the facts and feelings and things must marshal around and lend themselves to this sublime journey. Indeed, their very life, their power, their glory is born of the soul's touch upon them as she passes on her way.

Did you never feel the stifling narrowness of the realistic book? All lines are boundaries, things are things, words are words and "nothing more;" no windows, no glimpses beyond. The darkness brings out no distant stars, the day awakes no great soulful songs. There's nothing to lose, nothing to gain, no hazard of great destinies—dry, dull, dead. Sometimes the dullness is relieved by the backward plunge into our animal nature through the lower vent of life—the senses, passions, and vices of the soul. This is simply the way of death. For if the bugle call of the soul be "forward"—and who will doubt it?—then "backward, backward," must ever be the death knell.

But the book is not complete at this point. The author, though realistic, does not belong to the school of realism. In his search he has discovered himself. In looking for an outer world he stumbles upon an inner world.

Listen! "I have considered the task which God hath given to the sons of men, to exercise themselves withal. He hath made everything beautiful in its season. He hath also put the *world into their heart;* only they understand not the work of God from beginning to end."

God hath made everything beautiful in its season, and we have considered man's task in seeking out that beautiful in the outer world. But now we come upon the strange and disturbing fact that there is an inner world, a heart-world, only we cannot understand it. This heart-world is a mystery waiting to be revealed.

All through the book there are gleams and flashes and disturbing monitions of this heart-world mingling with the outer world of pleasure, affairs, and knowledge. Yet our author does not project the heart-world as a work of the imagination. Had he done so he would have given us a romance, "a vision from his own heart and not out of the mouth of the Lord." For romance is but the ideal projection of the heart-world. From the realistic shores of sin and sorrow and toil we sail in the good ship Imagination for our Arcady, for the land where everything comes out right; where the

wicked finally cease from troubling. We shall always love the romance, sweet refuge of weary hours. It has its blessed ministry, but life itself does not lie in that direction. What indeed are the great human dreams of immortality but the projection over and over again of this heart-world.

But our author takes still another course. The heart-world is not to be projected, but awaits its own unfolding. The book like a mountain torrent rushes on. Like a man fighting his way through the tangled underbrush, it pushes for the open glade. And the light of the opening glade comes first in snatches through the foliage, growing at last into unbroken light in those memorable words, "This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man."

And this is no mere escape, no making the best of a bad case, but the aim from the beginning, the goal enhanced and glorified by the method and way of approach.

One thing stands out above all others, and that is the unabashed strength of the author's heart. The heart-world may be a mystery, yet a mystery he will never surrender. Uncrushed

by the defeats of this world, unallured by the dreams of another, he holds right on in the strength of his soul. And the goal is not a book, but a Being. There is no final book, but there is a final Being. "Fear God, and keep his comandments." This is the "whole duty." Nay, literally read, "the whole of man," the whole story of man. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth"—throw open the gates of thy being, give vent to thy nature. Let all that is in thee rise to its utmost. Make the most of thy soul forces, of brain and eye, of heart and hand. "But know that God will bring thee into judgment." All must be marshaled under the divine scrutiny; held to the divine criticism; shaped by the divine thought and judgment. For this and this alone is the whole of man. Only this comprehends the whole story of man. This gives the higher vent of life—the open road of the soul.

According, then, to our author life is no mad plunge into this world, no mere dream of another, but an heroic unfolding of what is in us, the evolving of the heart-world through God.

And this is the thought of the Bible itself. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we have a long line of heroes. If we go back to their history

the secret of their heroism is out. They met God, this one at the bush, that one by the brook, and this again under the oak. And it was the Hero-God. Wherever or whenever he appeared it was as the Hero of life, the inner life, the heart-world. Around this meeting has grown the Bible. It is realistic but not realism. No nature-God is ever made the hero. No literature grew about the molten calf. It is idealistic but not idealism. It never swings off into romance; never seeks the dream-world. That tendency drifts of its own accord into the pageantry of the Apocrypha. It is the book of the heart-world evolving through the divine Hero. It is not a dream-world of the imagination, but the real world of revelation, the heart-world, unfolding in the midst of the great world, weaving into its wonderful story hints of nature, intuitions of the soul, and dreams of the world, shaping them all to the higher end—unfolding and unfolding till finally from the matchless heart fell the matchless words, "Let not your heart be troubled. In my Father's house are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you."

Life, then, is not an enfolding of the outer world in terms of pleasure, knowledge, or pos-

sessions, but the unfolding of the heart-world in terms of faith, hope, and love. It is the mastery of the outer through the inner. Is not this the best word of modern philosophy? Life is not an impression, but an expression. It is something to be given, not gotten. There's a world to be made, not found. The sooner we grasp this thought the better. We are not paupers begging our way through the world, whining when stones are given for bread and serpents for fish. We are princes strewing our pathway with the largess of the soul. It is this heroic role through the Hero-God that leaves all such ancient legends as "vanity of vanities" far behind.

It was at this very point that life took on a new meaning to the author; that turned the world from "vanity" into substance. "Cast thy bread upon the waters." Do you want a better world to live in? Make it better. Cast forth what is in you, and the whole earth and sea and sky shall change its hue.

> "Sow thy seed in the morning,
> And slack not thy hand in the evening,
> And the light shall be sweet to thee."

Sow, sow thyself. And what goes forth as seed

and toil will return in a larger, sweeter light; will bless thy last hours with a glorious sunset.

"When the clouds are full of rain
They empty it upon the earth."

This is the divine order: when things are full they overflow and create a new wealth along their path—trees and grass and flowers. Pour out what is in thee and see if the flowers will not spring up all about thee with their fragrance and beauty. The great world must come to its best through the heart-world. Think of the infinite resources of this heart-world from imagination to hope, from fancy to faith, from logic to love. The world is not dying for the cattle on a thousand hills, nor for the mountain-locked gold, but for the divine wealth of the soul.

How apt, therefore, is the exhortation of our author, followed by that strange but beautiful death-song of this very heart-world: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth" —while this inner world is at flood-tide of youthful powers, when under the brooding of the divine Hero they shall rise to their noblest; "Before the sun groweth dark;" before the spring-tide of joy be gone, and the exuberance

of life be lost; before "the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut on the streets;" before the world is too much for our craven hearts, and we would shut out all sights and sounds of the noisy world-street; before "the daughters of music be brought low;" before the strong swinging lyric of the soul loses its power to redeem men; before "the silver cord be loosed"—nerve gone, courage flabby, the cords of life too slack to speed the arrow of effort; before "the pitcher be broken," and we can no longer turn and dip life from the pure fountains of God; before the heart-world has fallen into decay, its powers gone, its forces vanished, its future lost—nothing to evolve, nothing to give, nothing to put into the great world with living, creative force.

LITERATURE

The Book of the Meeting

"The cygnet finds the water; but the man
Is born in ignorance of his element,
And feels out blind at first, disorganized
By sin i' the blood—his spirit insight dulled
And crossed by his sensations. Presently
He feels it quicken in the dark sometimes:
When mark be reverent, be obedient—
For such dumb motions of imperfect life
Are oracles of vital Deity."

—*Mrs. Browning.*

"How dared I let expand the force
Within me, till some *out-soul* whose resource
It grew for should direct it? Every law
Of life, its every fitness, every flaw,
Must *One* determine whose corporeal shape
Would be no other than the prime escape
And revelation to me of a Will
Orblike o'ershrouded and inscrutable
Above, save at the point which, I should know,
Shone that myself, my powers, might overflow."

—*Browning.*

THE BOOK OF THE MEETING

"And he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord."—2 Kings xxiii, 2.

One of the first thoughts of life is that we have fallen heir to the universe. The blue sky and velvet turf; the daisied fields and mysterious mountains; the song of the brook and the laughter of children; the quiet of the home and the hum of the market, all wait on us with their ministries. We are heirs of all there is. But another thought follows hard upon this, that the value of the great world's ministry is all dependent upon the character of the inner world, the heart-world. In vain will the distant star beckon to the holden eyes. In vain will nature's harmonies fall upon the discordant soul. And in vain will heroic destinies appeal to the sordid heart. They are indeed ministering spirits sent forth to minister, but only to those who are heirs, real heirs, "heirs of salvation."

The real burden of life, then, is not in the great world about us, but in the little world within us. How to work out God's purpose there, how to bear the burden of our own

divinity, how to achieve our birthright—this is the real burden, and in all the long history of the world but one man ever dared to say, "My burden is light." And he was the One who kept a lifelong tryst with God, the One in whom heaven and earth met, in whom the divine and human blended.

This very idea of life, the meeting of the divine and human in man, lies at the heart, is the compelling mystery, of all great literatures. The songs, stories, and dramas of history are the struggle of man to find somewhere on the world's great battlefield the divine Hero of this life we are striving to live, some One who can meet us in life's stress and carry us over into life's victory, descending to our level that he may lift us to his.

The great classics have failed at this very point. They have failed to effect this meeting. Their aspirations are flung back upon moaning hearts. Their heroes escape to the underworld. Their dramas break down in confusion.

> "Falling with their weight of cares
> Upon the great world's altar stairs
> That slope through darkness up to God,
> They stretch lame hands of faith and grope,
> And gather dust and chaff."

It is a daring thought this that lies at the heart of great literatures. It is the free spirit of man going forth to meet the free Spirit of God. It is the passion of communion. From one side the human wanderer is groping his way outward. From the other the divine Hero is moving inward. Will they ever meet? All human literatures have wrought on this problem. The classic writer failed because he could never think his way past nature's laws, human conditions, and heredity.

"God was trying to speak with him and he was trying to hear,
But the angry roar of an angry sea
Had told his soul it was not free;
And his strange imperfect ear
Had only caught on the breast of day
The strain of a song that was far away."

Through freedom we make our way to God. But freedom is not a question in thinking, but in living. It is a task not to be thought out through logic, but wrought out through love. Therefore the way to God is no thought journey but a great life journey. The whole man must be in it plunging to depths of penitence and rising to heights of faith. It is a strange, wild, dramatic journey, and it is life from start

to finish. God may not always be within range of man's thought, but he is always within range of his life.

The book of the meeting, of the coming together of God and man, then, will never be a work of science, nor philosophy, nor theology, nor yet a work of the imagination. It will be a fragment of real life, a segment of human history, stranger than fiction, sublimer than philosophy, and more substantial than science.

Now, in the days of King Josiah such a book was found, buried away in the temple under the dust of years. They called it the book of the covenant, primarily the coming together of God and man.

The origin of the book carries us back into the depths of history, into a soul's experience. It grew about the life of Moses. Whatever developments may have followed through appreciative interpreters of after years, the core of this scripture is the tryst hour of God and Moses. It is one of the sublimest chapters in all the story of man, flooded with a light that is not of this world.

Briefly the story runs thus: Moses is born on the banks of the Nile. The mother looks into her child's eyes and reads the promises. But

what avail the promises? For there is the king's decree. Then God plays the pity of a princess over against the king's decree, and the love of a mother over against the king's court, and a vision of the Invisible over against the king's empire. Yes, pity, love, and visions are mightier in this great life battle than decrees, courts, and empires. The product is a young man with the fire mists of a new world within him. A modern writer has said, "None but yourself shall you meet on the highway of Fate. If Judas go forth to-night it is toward Judas his steps will tend." Then we can never get beyond ourselves. Life rushes round and round in a circle. Where, then, is progress? This is pure fatalism. This is the thought of the Greek tragedy, but not the thought of the Hebrew Bible, not the deepest intuitions of life. Judas may meet no one but himself in the road of fate. But I dare affirm that even in Judas there is not only the constructed man, made thus and so, shaped for fate; but there is also a constructive force, the possibilities of a new man, the fire mists of an unborn life, the germ of a world that might be. If he follow this, he shall meet God and not himself.

This fire burned in Moses. It was the fire of

creative love, the fire of divine chivalry. He went forth not along the highway of fate, but of freedom. Every blow was a liberty blow for the slave, the brother, the maidens. The bush burned in him before it burned at the foot of Horeb. Sometimes we smother the burning within and never come to the burning without; to the bush that flames, and the voice that speaks—to God, and life's great destiny.

It was not so much a meeting of thought, of council, as of spirit. Not two souls with a single thought, but two souls with a common burden, a single purpose. It is in our purpose, not our thought, we command our destiny. We may be very poor in thought, but if we are rich in purpose the new world is not far off. Moses had many things to learn, but in one thing his spirit and God's burned to the same end, with redeeming purpose, with creative love for the soul, for the heart-world. We shall never understand the full meaning of that hour, nor any other such hour, when God and man meet in a similar relation, with the same common burden. It is the birth hour of new worlds, new churches, new souls resplendent with divine possibilities. All history has been struggling to utter the meaning of that hour

when the cry of the human reached heaven; when the high meaning of life centered in the hands clasped between God and man.

The real coming together, however, of God and Moses is a process that invites a deeper analysis. There are two or three suggestive expressions in the story of the meeting. One is the strange name God gave himself—the "I Am." Laying aside all the metaphysical interpretations that have clustered around the name, what is the first practical impression awakened by it? "I Am." Why, that is the very thing I am not! That is just the thing I cannot say about myself, yet the very thing I am forever striving for. I want to be. Some scholars make *el,* the root word for God, to mean goal, the aim or end toward which we strive. No doubt the first practical thought of life is not about our source, but our goal. We are philosophers before we ask whence we came. But the moment we begin to live we are striving toward something or some one. We know that the great struggle of our humanity is to be—to be more and more. The burden of all history, full of thought, passion, and tragedy is the story of "I want to be." Is it not the burden of every boy's life, "I want to be this," 'I want to

be that," as he pursues the ever vanishing and deepening ideals?

"God is—
Man partly is and wholly hopes to be."

Now, it is on this wonderful road of "I want to be" God meets us. He never meets us on any other. It is the road strewn with the wreckage of discarded ideals; the road of godly sorrow; every abandoned wreck stained with the tears of repentance; the road of faith, of life's expression, ever new, ever higher, ever holier.

It was along this road that God met Moses. You can imagine the time when all the world-ideals were flashing before him, when he said, "I want to be a soldier, I want to be a statesman, I want to be a king." One after another they hung before him till through the deepening light of the "Invisible" they finally faded out of sight.

"There are flashes struck from midnights,
There are fire-flames noondays kindle,
Whereby piled up honors perish,
Whereby swollen ambitions dwindle."

Then I think another set of ideals of a Hebrew character hovered over him when he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's

daughter, but chose rather to be called the son of a Hebrew daughter. These were moral and spiritual ideals, the higher, diviner thought of life, the higher expression of life, when he was saying, "I want to be an Abraham, a Jacob, a prince of the house of Israel—yes, a Messiah."

But what is the full significance of this great Mosaic ambition? What does it mean? We are still at the bush, and God throws upon the man a tremendous task. And from him is wrung the query, "What am I that you . . . ?" The answer is simply this: "Moses, when you have taken up the task and carried it to its fulfillment you will have answered your own question." God has a very practical way of teaching us what we are. The moral stature and spiritual consciousness of life are wrought into us by the work we do—worked in that it may be worked out again, as the sun weaves the dew, air, and earth into the plant that the plant may in turn unfold into the flower. God is always working for the flowering of life.

He was working for the flowering of Moses —the great outer events growing into one sublime inner event. And that event was when Moses went into Pharaoh's presence, in the

name of the people, and said, "God has sent me to tell you to let my son go."

This is the answer to Moses's question, "A son of God." John Fiske says, "The lesson of evolution is that through all these weary ages the human soul has not been cherishing in religion a delusive phantom, but in spite of sundry endless groping and stumbling it has been rising to the recognition of its essential kinship with the everlasting God." This great lesson of evolution was long ago forestalled in the story of Moses—first the story, and then the science of the story. "Sons of God"—that thought has revolutionized the world. Make room for the sons of God. Build the house larger and larger. Let my sons go.

Out of this new relation must grow great commandments, the principles of the new life. Henceforth man's relation to God is more essential than to earth, sea, and air, with their fatalistic laws.

> "Closer is he than breathing,
> And nearer than hands and feet."

Never again

> "Shall the angry roar of an angry sea
> Prove to the soul it is not free."

It is said that when Goethe first met Herder his soul was in a ferment. He needed some master, some great personality who should help him to find himself. He found such a one in Herder. Moses found such a one in God. God helped Moses to find himself. The first product of the meeting was a book, the book the great world poets tried to write and could not. It is the book of the covenant, of the meeting. There must always be a book, for the glory of flaming bushes must not be lost. Earth is too poor, and heavenly visions too rare, to let them escape us. And the book will grow into a library of books shaping the world in the interest of this newborn son of God.

But instead of turning now to the books let us go a little deeper into the *finding* process. We are often cautioned against reading too much into our great men. We have a horror of myths. Let us rather fear lest we fail to find the half that is in them, and the world perish for bread. A truly great man will blossom many times, every century. He is God's century plant.

In the ordinary fairy story a world made to order is supplied for the hero fitting at every

point. In the real story of life the hero must make his own world. Real life is more difficult, but more divine. There is nothing of the fairy flavor about the story of Moses. No future cut and dried, made easy and beautiful, stretched before him. He went forth to carve his own future; to make his own world; to find himself through God.

The supreme fact in his life was God's presence. Then the general fact of God's presence grew into a specific fact in his own experience. He felt

> "A presence that disturbed him with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts."

Then the specific fact grew into something more than a fact. Why did God so persistently urge this fact upon Moses? Why did he press it at every turn? Why did he repeat it over and over? "Surely I will be with thee." Was it not an education, an informing? Informing in the true sense—forming within; not of a fact, but of God himself. While great things were transpiring about Moses a greater, diviner thing is taking place in him. It is God forming himself within the man. A God-conscious man is being born—a man who shall know the pain-

ful joy of divine thoughts, divine feelings, divine deeds.

Still the process of self-discovery demands another fact: not only the presence of God, but the presence of the world. The world was with him. Indeed, it was in him—the heritage of the past; the wisdom of Egypt; the blood of princes; the great wild world about him.

If God be in us the world must also be there; for God always keeps in touch with his world. And it is through the meeting of these two counterforces that we rise to our best, that we discover ourselves. When a small boy attempts for the first time to cross a raging river on a log he is told just to keep his eyes on the log—to let nothing swerve him from that. Slowly, cautiously, the little feet move out. The river rages beneath him; he sees it, feels it, it sweeps and swirls through his soul. For a moment he is seized with panic between log and river. Then his eye catches the log again and holds it firm. When he steps down on the other side he is a new boy. He is conscious of a strange new mastery within him. He is coming to his best, as Browning suggests that Michael stands the calmer and nobler for the writhing of the snake beneath his feet. Your saint who sails

out of sight of earth will never come to his best. Your worldling who lives like a mole out of sight of heaven will never come to his best. It is the man in whom heaven and earth meet, just as Jesus rose to his best when through the calm of heaven he quelled the rage of the world. In his life two worlds met as they must in all true lives. In him the troubled sea of life broke against the infinite shore. His was the life of the breakers, and that was its glory.

But this thought naturally brings us to another. Some one will be shocked at the idea of the world being in us. Why! is not the idea of life to keep the world out of us? Yes, that is one; but there is another better one. The world is in our life, but it is there in a strange new way: not as life, but as the material out of which life is made, through which we find life, through which we both discover and reveal ourself; as nature is in the life of the artist, as material for pictures; as thoughts and events are in the life of the poet, as material for poems; as the whole great world was in the life of Jesus Christ, as material for a new world to be born by the travail of his own soul. In this way we rise to our best. Through this we reach the fullness of our power.

Moses appears in several of the books. He is a striking figure moving in and out through the narrative—sometimes calm, sometimes shaken; now dumb with sorrow, now breaking into song; now raging at the people, and now pleading with God; a wonderful man. You would never tire of following such a career.

But in one book Moses rises to his best; and that is Deuteronomy, the power book of the Pentateuch. There you get the most of Moses—the stretch of soul, the pathos of patience, the sublimity of passion, and the divinity of thought. Through the book resounds the cry of the human, but chastened and tempered by the breath of God it comes to us in such strange heroic eloquence as no other book supplies.

The book is just throbbing with the man, and the man at his best. Here with eye fixed upon the Eternal Rock he rises into the heroic mastery of that wild human river that had sometimes swept him away. But there is more than mastery here. Here the world is with him, even in him, lying like a burden upon his soul—the wrecked, shattered, wayward, disappointing world. But his soul takes fire of God. The creative impulse swells within him. The old world is a possibility, the material for a new

and nobler world. The muse is there, the divinest muse, the muse of redemption. And this broken, disappointed, sorrow-riven soul lifts the old world into song—a song that to this day falls like the rain and distills like the dew on the seared fields of life.

I hardly dare approach the silent but unparalleled eloquence of that last scene when the message came from the mysterious mountain; when he rose in heroic majesty above a broken life, and the unfinished task; when with eye undimmed and step unshaken he went out calmly beyond the vision of man; when the fragment of his own life caught hold of God and was made complete.

"Therefore to whom turn I but to thee, the ineffable Name?
Builder and Maker thou, of houses not made with hands:
What! have fear of change from thee who art ever the same?
Doubt that thy power can fill the heart that thy power expands?
There shall never be one lost good!
. . . . . .
On the earth the broken arcs, in the heaven the perfect round."

LITERATURE

The Book of Life

"Comrado, I give you my hand!
I give you my love more precious than money.
I give you myself before preaching or law:
Will you give me yourself? Will you come travel with me?
Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?"

—*Whitman.*

"All things through thee take nobler form,
And look beyond the earth;
The mill-round of our fate appears
A sun-path in thy worth.
Me, too, thy nobleness has taught
To master my despair:
The fountains of my hidden life
Are through thy friendship fair."—*Emerson.*

THE BOOK OF LIFE

"And when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee."—Prov. vi, 22.

THERE are two kinds of books: the book that instructs, that widens the scope of our knowledge, that makes our horizon larger—brings more facts within it. A very important book, it fills our world with material for use. Then there is another book—one that talks with us, speaks to us, hunts us out. It is not so anxious to increase our knowledge as to increase us; to draw us out, wake us up, inspire us, move us. The two kinds of books have been called "books of knowledge" and "books of power."

The first book is full of facts, only facts. The personal element is avoided that we may get the facts, untouched, untinged, clean-cut, cold, dry.

The second book has facts, but also something more. The facts are magnetized by the writer. Every word is red-hot with his personality. Every thought is tinged with his soul. There is some one in the book, therefore it speaks, holds converse with us, is one of the

immortal companions of life. The fact books die; in the progress of knowledge new facts supersede the old ones. But the personality book lives forever.

The Bible is such a book—the greatest of all talking books, the holiest and most helpful of all companions.

The characters of the book speak to us through the facts—Abraham through his oak, Jacob through his well, and David through his city. Oak, well, and city are all touched into eloquence by the men who touched them. And the writers speak to us through its characters—through Saul and Samuel and David. Through them they speak a larger, diviner, more varied language. Through a thousand fragments of men they tell the great story of universal man. Then God speaks to us through the writers. They are moved by God and swing out in song and story and prophecy far beyond all boundaries until the story of man becomes the larger story of God and man—yes, of the God-man. For when he came he said, "They are they that testify of me." At the heart of the book, then, is this divine-human Personality who speaks to us in the language of literature. For literature is the language of

personality. It is the unfolding, the overflow, the outburst of the personal yearning toward the personal.

The Bible comes to us in this personal language. It has the lyrical speech.

Sometimes a young man will come to us in trouble. He opens his heart. We listen, we analyze. We can make but little out of the medley, only this: down in his life there is a longing—perhaps not a very strong one, only the smoking flax. But it is there hampered, hedged in, and smothered by conditions and circumstances.

We might enter into plans, ways, and means with him. But we feel he needs something more, something naked words cannot effect, something to strengthen his heart, something to fan the fire. His future is not in new plans, but in that smoldering fire. He needs inspiration—something that can reach and help the longing buried in there among the impossibilities.

We have had such experiences ourselves. We have felt weak, helpless, baffled. We did not want any new philosophy of the way, but just a voice, a friendly voice, a sympathetic voice—something to start the echo in us, to start the

song. We could sing if some one would raise the tune for us.

Do you see? The ministry of song. It is one of the first ministries of life. There is the cradle song. Do you think its only ministry is to sing the child to sleep? Indeed, its great ministry is to sing the soul awake.

"Still linger in our noon of time,
And on our Saxon tongue,
The echoes of the home-born hymns
The Aryan mothers sung.

"And childhood had its litanies
In every age and clime;
The earliest cradles of the race
Were rocked to poet's rhyme."

And there are the songs of manhood, carrying life out and up with a larger, stronger sweep:

"O our manhood's prime vigor! No spirit feels waste,
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor sinew unbraced.
O, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock up to rock."

Then, too, old age has its songs bearing even across the flood:

"Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark:

"For though from out our bourn of time and place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar."

The Bible speaks to us in the language of song. It speaks to the great longing of the soul. It broods over our immortality, to start the echo, to raise the tune in us, to give us heart, to lift us above and carry us beyond, to make us conscious of our immortality, to give us strength, to give us life, whereby we cry, "I can do all things."

The power of these old Bible songs is not their angelic, but their divine-human, ring. They reach us at all depths of our humanity and sing us into great heights of our divinity. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? I shall yet praise thee for the help of thy countenance." The very power of this old psalm is the strange meeting of its heights and depths. It is the divine harmony sweeping down upon us through life's discords, lifting the soul from despair to praise.

And these old Bible songs undertake to sing the multitudinous song of life: its sword songs, well songs, shepherd songs, battle songs, and all its great life songs.

The ministry of song is one of the great ministries. When Isaiah saw the redeemed returning with joy upon their heads they were singing—singing their way to Zion. King Arthur's city, they said, was reared to the music of harps. But the great city that hath foundations is being built to the lyrics of God.

"Truth is fair: should we forego it?
Can we sigh right for a wrong?
God himself is the best Poet,
And the Real is his song."

If now we return again to our own life, we find the old longing carried a step further. We are not just now thinking of how to surmount this difficulty, but how to reach that goal. It is not wings for the hour for which we are asking, but wings for the whole flight through. Feeling has passed on into thought, into "long, long thoughts." We are trying to live out something.

Why do you and I like to read a story? Is it not because we are trying to live a story and make it come out right? We need something more than a song. We need a story. And the Bible speaks to us in stories; in the language of the Epic—real stories; stories that take hold of us; that suggest; that lead, and always in

the right direction. They never lead backward into the vile swamp of the senses. They never take fanciful flights into impossibilities. Realistic they are, plain and simple of speech; with many a romantic touch, but always leading clearly, strongly, swiftly toward the heights of manhood and womanhood. Call to mind Joseph, Ruth, David, Samuel, or the great tragedies that by contrast lead in the same direction.

Then all these fragment stories are woven into one whole story. It is more than the story of men, it is the story of man, of the soul. It does not simply appeal to the smaller ambitions of life, it appeals to the supreme ambition.

From the very first the book suggests that we are God's children; that there is something in us that is like God. But it is only a suggestion from God, an ambition in man. The thing itself is not apparent at the start. It is only the fire mists of the soul's great story waiting to be developed through the converse of God and man.

And the converse is shaped to the speech of man; for God always talks with us, not to us. This is an offense to some people who think God should have spoken, in the world's child-

hood, in the language of the full-orbed present-day science.

God talks with man. He gives and takes. He takes the crudities of one generation, breathes into them the larger, rounder, completer life, and hands them back to the next.

So God tells the story of the soul. Rather he makes us tell our own story, working out that divine ambition within us, that vague likeness of God. At length we find ourselves reading life in the light of God's own "Son." Then the full meaning of life sweeps over us; the supreme ambition takes form, while life's unreached possibilities flash upon us in the "Son." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be:" but "we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

Returning once more to our own life, we are led to ask, Is this story of the soul possible? Can this great story of the ages become an experience in each individual?

If the Bible were to follow the ordinary language of literature we should expect it to speak now in the language of the drama. But at this point the ways part. And very deep and significant is the parting of the ways.

While we are crying out for strength to live out the great life of the soul, no mere dramatic scene passes before us. The Bible is decidedly dramatic, but the critics say it has no pure drama. In place of it there is the literature of prophecy—the literature of a Presence. Was it the real dead-in-earnest prophetic intuitions of Mrs. Browning that made her say, "I will write no plays"? In prophecy God speaks face to face. Its language is more than language, it is life.

In Browning's "Saul" we have the story of Saul's insanity; and David comes to redeem him from it. First he sings and plays, and Saul wakens slowly, then falls back again. Then he takes up the king's life and stirs his ambition. Slowly the great man rises again, only to fall back. Then the young shepherd abandons song and story and offers himself. He'll lay down his own life for the king. But even this is powerless to redeem him. Finally, in a frenzy of divine despair, he obliterates himself, leaving the Christ standing in his place. "See the Christ stand."

How like the Bible!—God in his songs; God in the great story of life; then God face to face, his life poured out.

It begins in the garden. The essence of prophecy is not a prediction but a presence. But where there is the presence language will project itself beyond the boundaries. Language will grasp the future because the future itself is present.

There is the first sin, and God hunting the sinner down, as he has hunted us down many and many a time in our own experience. He hunts us down; faces us with plain speech.

These face-to-face talks of God are plain of speech because God is talking to his own. As a boy said the other day, overhearing a conversation in which great plainness of speech was used, "Why, they talk as though they were related." God speaks plainly because we are related to him. He cuts deep because he is ready to pour out his life for us. He is the most ruthless critic of life, and the most appreciative, the most sympathetic. He analyzes us, takes us apart, till every part lies naked in his hand condemned or approved in the white light of his judgment. Then in upon the dead, dying, quivering parts he pours his life till they live again, stand erect, radiant with a new life. "The angel of his presence hath redeemed them." We know the power of a presence in

our own life. A skeptic once said to me, "I can sweep away the arguments of the philosophers, but not the presence of my mother."

And the Bible is always growing into a presence, a life, a reality, through the prophets.

> "Aye, and while your common men
> Lay telegraphs, gauge railroads, reign, reap, dine,
> And dust the flaunting carpets of the world
> For kings to walk on or our President,
> The *prophet* suddenly will catch them up
> With his voice like a thunder—'This is soul,
> This is life, this word is being said in heaven,
> Here's God down on us! What are you about?' "

The book is forever growing into a presence; dissolving at times into the great world history, but resolving again into the divine Presence. It is the same face with its assuring light, the same heart with its redeeming blood. In historic form once he came. In spiritual redeeming presence he forever and forever comes.

> "But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
> A present help is he;
> And faith has yet its Olivet,
> And love its Galilee.
>
> "O Lord and Master of us all,
> Whate'er our name or sign,
> We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
> We test our lives by thine!"

HISTORY

The Crossed Hands

"The real and consoling truth is that our free will can modify our original nature. The dark problem of heredity need not oppress us with an eternal burden; and a revolt of our personality can often cast to the winds the tyranny of ancestral traits, and the crippling restraint of outgrown creeds."—*Victor Charbonnel.*

"O my God, I will live. But I shall not truly live unless thou makest thyself felt in the involuntary impulses of my being. I will live by thee. Be thou God of my will."—*Ibid.*

"God is the great companion *of man,* the loving yet terrible friend of his inmost soul."— *John Cotter Morrison.*

THE CROSSED HANDS

"And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn. . . . And said, . . . The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." —Gen. xlviii, 14–16.

"And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, . . . That I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days."—Gen. xlix, 1.

THE story of one man at this point branches into the story of many. It is no longer one colossal figure, like Abraham, but twelve fragments of the Abrahamic life, and each fragment an individual that will again subdivide, till men have grown to families, and families to tribes, and tribes to nations. This is history.

Moved by the old Abrahamic faith, fire, ambition, handed down the royal line, Joseph brings his two sons to be adopted into Jacob's family. The adoption will give them a place in the succession of Israel.

When the father brings the boys for the blessing he presents, according to the custom, the elder, Manasseh, for the right hand, and the younger, Ephraim, for the left, giving the elder the first place. But the trembling hands of the old seer cross themselves, the right resting upon Ephraim and the left upon Manasseh. And when the father resisted, saying, "You are

making a mistake," the old man replied, "Nay, I know, I know."

The mystery of the crossed hands—the first is last, and the last first. One man designed by birth and training for a chief is superseded by another who has never entered into our calculations.

What is the mystery of the crossed hands? Why does one man live, and live, and live through all the centuries, and another perish from the memory of man? Why does the course of life in families, churches, nations, take such strange directions, baffling all prophecy and confounding all science?

Is there a clear and simple gospel of progress that throws light upon the mystery? This is the burning question of philosophy to-day. Our modern truth-hunters have left the airy realms of abstraction and are plunging elbow-deep into the hard facts of everyday life, trying to break the seven seals, trying to open the book—the great book of history—and win therefrom the secret of God. This is the attempt of our social studies,

> "As with fingers of the blind
> We are groping here to find
> What the hieroglyphics mean."

When Kidd takes us with him through the maze of London life we are dazed and baffled. At last he stops before the church, and we are relieved to think the quest ends here. But when he proceeds to give us fifteen different definitions of religion we are puzzled again, till at last in his final analysis he brings them down to a supernatural power. But this supernatural power is also the basis of the Bible. Then, instead of following the weary way of the philosopher, let us turn to this old Bible story, dig into its depths, and learn what it has to say about the mystery of the crossed hands.

Tennyson has said that if we could understand a flower, what it is, root and all, and all in all, we should know what God and man are. And if we can go to the bottom of this old Bible story root and all, and all in all, we shall find the gospel of history.

The first thing we notice in this scene around the dying patriarch is Joseph bringing his sons for Jacob's blessing. There was no doubt a fine chance for the boys in Egypt. Great world opportunities were there. But Joseph turns his back upon them all and leads his two sons over to an old chief without a country, and dying at that.

There were no world opportunities here, but there were great divine opportunities. There is a difference. A mere world opportunity offers us the world outside of us, ignoring, and even sometimes ruining the inner world, while a divine opportunity offers us the outer world through the inner world—first the kingdom of God, first the kingdom of manhood, first the life within, its rights to live and evolve. This is man's only divine right—to live—to unfold —to evolve. And faith claims this right.

This led Joseph to put his sons in the succession of the divine opportunities. He recognizes the value of environment. He believes it is worth something to those boys to keep step with such men as Abraham, to get into the heroic swing, to be brought up on the old songs and stories woven out of the heroic past.

"Faith of our fathers! living still
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword:
O how our hearts beat high with joy
Whene'er we hear that glorious word:
Faith of our fathers! holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death!"

It is worth something to them to live under the inspiration of successive revelations, and put their hand to such a task as had been as-

signed his people. And he was right: the character of man can never be separated from his environment. Calvinistic creeds and Scottish mountains will make rugged men. Arcadian hills and Grecian thought will carve classic brows. A mountainous home and border warfare will make Ephraim a warrior. But this alone can never explain the mystery of the crossed hands. For see: Manasseh is the eldest. He is carefully trained with that thought in view. He has the inspiration of birth, the advantage of opportunity. The songs and stories are for him. Every influence is thrown around him to make him a right-hand man, and yet he turns out a left-hand man. And history is ever repeating this story: start men at the right hand, and they come out on the left. Man can never be saved by walling him in with privileges, though every privilege bear the face of an angel.

It is a remarkable fact that nations have always died not of their disadvantages but of their advantages; for advantages breed caste, and caste is the fatal disease of humanity. It is supposed to be bad on the outside, it is worse inside. Caste of wealth, caste of intellect, caste of blood, caste of religion, all fatal. Israel,

Rome, and Greece all died of caste. They tell us the privileged classes of Europe are constantly dying at the top—sustained only by the replenishing again from the bottom.

This age is making much of the word "environment," and there is much in it, but by no means the full meaning of life. It is not a full gospel. The secret is deeper. Of all the sons of Jacob the disadvantages and hardships of Joseph were the greatest; yet he alone excelled. In any country village it is no uncommon thing for the son of the nabob to go to ruin, reeking in privileges, while the barefoot boy makes his way over the hard and flinty rocks to success.

Turning again to our story, we find another very interesting feature. Jacob in blessing his sons characterizes them: "Reuben, you are like water—unstable; no one will ever be able to depend upon you." "Issachar, you are like an ass—a beast of burden, dull and mundane." "No spark disturbs the clod." "Zebulun, you are a seaman, restless, roving." That is, back of a man's opportunities are his native characteristics—heredity. Blood tells. We are the fruit of the ages. We grow on a tree that is not of our planting. We are a house built not

by hands, but by the red corpuscles of the centuries.

"Humanity," says one, "at all times of its existence is composed far more of the dead than of the living." This is often too true, practically true; we are more grandfather than self. Our grandfather was left to us, and we have made nothing out of him.

Grant Allen, in his last book, proposed to save the world by the proper mixing of blood, as you breed horses. If this were possible it might do for the unborn, if we knew how to mix the blood. But it is certainly hard on the rest of us. We might undertake to save ourselves first-hand. But to do it second-hand is beyond us.

This old Bible thought, coming to the surface in many places—almost a matter of faith as seen in the jealously guarded genealogies—this old thought is the divinest utterance of science. It has almost revolutionized the study of the race. It is valuable in history, nations, families, and men. But it is not the secret of the crossed hands. It is not the gospel of history. Now and then it is put to utter confusion, in the crisscrossing of good and bad, of wise and unwise.

"Here and there a cotter's babe is royal-born by right divine;
Here and there my lord is lower than his oxen or his swine.
Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! once again the sickening game."

Where are the hereditary sons of Grecian genius? where the blood children of the Roman patrician? where the natural descendants of Abraham?

No man can begin with his ancestors. If they are good, he is proud and crawls inside like a hermit crab. If they are bad, then he says, "I am not to blame." The men in our prisons usually explain themselves by their ancestry. They hide themselves among the dead. The secret of the crossed hands lies deeper.

Now let us turn once more to the Bible story. Here is a leaf out of Jacob's life: "The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." Deeper than the blessing of environment, deeper than the blessing of inherited tendencies, is the blessing of the Angel. Every true and earnest soul living deeply, strongly, and divinely is conscious that his life is redeemed by some One, a power not himself. This was Socrates's experience. This is the

experience of every great human figure rising to its conscious destiny.

We have come, then, to the individual. Give your man his environment, his opportunities, what will he do with them? They are not life, only possibilities of life. Or give him his inherited tendencies, the possibilities within him. Still the question remains, What will he do with these?

One of Browning's characters is made to take a blot and develop it, shaping its rays, rounding it out, finally into a star. Given, then, the blot we call opportunities without, and tendencies within, how are we to shape them into a star? Who is equal to such a task? Who can take this strange human blot and redeem it into a star? Who has eyes, eyes to see the divine in the humdrum of the hour? Who knows that these are angels? Are they not the same old wayfarers who have called at our door so many times? Who can always tell the difference between a tramp and an angel? And who understands the genius of tendencies? Who can grade them? Who has eyes to see them? Who dares say, "This I'll curb, and this I'll cultivate, and this I'll kill"? Who is such a master of tendencies? What will save Abra-

ham with his strange great dream of life from becoming a mere dreamer? What will save Joseph with his ambition from becoming a tyrant? What will save Jacob with his thrift from becoming a miser?

One thing, one only; the battle is on from the first—not between Jacob and Esau, but between Jacob and the Angel. And there by the Jabbok the Angel conquered. The fast fist was opened, and the man passed into the prince. As he gradually rose in response to the Angel of life he put his environment under tribute. Indeed, he put himself under tribute. He rose into the mastery of life through the Master of life, the Angel of redemption, the Hero of the soul.

There is an Angel of redemption, a Master of life, a Hero of the soul, the One with whom you and I have wrestled at our Jabbok. Sometimes he seems to stand in our way; he will not let us go over; he holds us back, and we turn upon him with all our force. But when he would leave us, seeming to give way to our wish, then we cry, "I will not let thee go."

Ah, this wrestling Angel of life! How he works in among the tendencies of the soul, and out among the opportunities of life, checking this ambition, shaping that aspiration, training

this desire. He makes the path easy here and hard there, the ascent now slow, now fast. The Angel we fear yet love, cling to yet oppose. Through him we rise into the mastery of life. Through him we command our destiny. This is the secret of the crossed hands.

In the little seed we plant in the springtime there are three things: First, its inheritance: this is born a rose, that a bluebell, and this a pansy. Second, its environments: earth, air, dew, and sun. Then there is the Angel of life, the mystery that wrestles with the inherited tendencies, not to change but to master them; the mystery that wrestles with sun, dew, air, and earth, not to defeat them, but to master them, bringing forth the pansy, the bluebell, and the rose, each in its order. Just those three things in life—your native qualities and your environment, your characteristics and your surroundings, and the Angel of life bringing them into the divine mastery, making them throb with a newborn life, breathing upon them, shaping and carrying them upward into sons of God.

Kidd in his suggestive book started from the general thought of a supernatural power. In his last paragraph he said, "I find a growing

sense of reverence in the world." You have, then, taking the book as a whole, this position: the supernatural mystery with our faces toward it. This is the position throughout the Bible—the great mystery and man facing toward it.

When I was a boy I used to look away upon the mountains. Behind the purple mists I imagined a world of battlefields, of lions, and cities. When I suggested this to another boy he laughed at me. But I lived many happy days out of that mystery. It never worked out as I expected—no cities, no battles, no lions. And one day my world faded away, giving place to another.

There are many such mysteries out of which we live, mysteries that are the compelling power of great religions and great philosophies. Finally they topple over and fall to pieces.

Not so this supreme mystery of the Bible, this Angel of life, this Hero of the soul. Out of him men have lived the highest masteries of life; out of him have mastered the past, the present, the future. There has been no fading and falling away of this mystery. It has been growing sublimer and sublimer, more and more real; unfolding to grander and grander heights. And this is history.

HISTORY

The Heart of the Vision

"He is the axis of the star,
He is the sparkle of the spar,
He is the heart of every creature,
He is the meaning of each feature;
And his mind is the sky,
Than all it holds more deep, more high."

—*Emerson.*

"Progress is the law of life—man's self is not yet Man!
For men begin to pass their nature's bound,
And find new hopes and cares which fast supplant
Their proper joys and griefs; and outgrow all
The narrow creeds of right and wrong, which fade
Before the unmeasured thirst for good; while peace
Rises within them ever more and more."—*Browning.*

THE HEART OF THE VISION

"Where there is no vision, the people perish."—Prov. xxix, 18.

Proverbs are born of the storm and stress of human history. They are the evolution of a people's experience; not the handiwork of thought, but the children of the soul. There is blood in them.

This proverb is born of Israel's experience and leads into the heart of her history: "Where there is no vision, the people perish." This old Hebrew history is built out of visions; out of what the seers saw. Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and Isaiah were men of visions. They saw, and because they saw they built. The building power is always born of visions. Through them the nerve of heaven is brought to bear upon the facts of earth.

The old Hebrew world with its life, legislation, and literature was born of visions. The patterns Moses saw in the mount were not like the patterns we mark around. They were visions of truth, glimpses of God and the soul, afterward expressed in candlesticks, draperies, and altars, till the whole temple throbbed with the presence of the living God.

Her poets were seers. They saw beyond. They had such visions of God as threw all nature into his ministry. The heavens declared his glory, the day was full of his speech, and the night shone with his knowledge. The trees of the field clapped their hands and the mountains and hills broke forth into singing at his approach. All nature was touched and tinged by the presence of God.

The prophets were moral and spiritual seers. They saw, saw visions of a new world, a new age, a new man, a God-man. With bleeding hands and breaking heart they built with the rough material at their feet. To them the times, the nation, all history was the great work field of God, and the true mission of man to toil by his side.

In all this the nation was struggling through her visions into fellowship with God. Seeing beyond is always looking Godward, striving unto his presence. And when there is no vision, when we fail to look beyond, the fellowship is lost and the people perish; for we live by the fellowship of God.

And there were times when there were no visions. Men saw the temple and the furniture, but nothing beyond. They heard no voices, felt

no great emotions. Temple-treaders, Isaiah called them; not listeners, not worshipers, not seers, but treaders. Good treaders, but souls are not grown in a religious treadmill. It takes visions. Life forever seeks the open sky, the larger range, the fellowship of God.

And there were times when the singers were dumb; for men saw nothing, heard nothing, felt nothing to sing about. The earth was a plow field for the farmer, a pasture for the shepherd, and a quarry for the builder. Good times for grain and cattle and building, but not for men. It takes visions to make men. You can make no patriots, no true statesmen, no real prophets, without visions. There is always danger when we grow prosperous—when the world about us becomes too thick and gross of tongue to speak the speech of God; when the poets fail us.

And there were times when the prophets had no visions from the Lord. Knowledge had increased, things amassed, the people multiplied. Knowledge and things and people: and people and things and knowledge, how shall they be set to the music of divine progress? What is lacking? The vision, the ideal, the creative force of heaven. Nations are not built from

the bottom up, but from the top down; not up from the rocks, but down from the constitution, the ideal, the vision. There is no art by which men and money and intellect can be shaped into a church. It can only be "built out of heaven to God." And the lesson of all lessons to be learned is that man can never be built up from the earth, though we command the powers of heredity and the influences of environment. He must be built not toward the God-man, but out of the God-man, inheriting his mastery. Divine progress is not in knowledge and things and people, but in the mastery of the soul. Master souls are always the need of the age—masters of what we know, making every thought throb with the life of God; masters of what we have, winging every dollar with the pinions of love; masters of what we are, waking the cold marble of our humanity into living statues of Christhood.

But to reach the full meaning of this thought we need to carry our study another step, to analyze the old Hebrew vision. What is the essential feature of the Hebrew vision? Whence its great value? Why do we brush aside the visions of other peoples and hold that these Hebrew visions are the very fountains of life?

If we answer that they are supernatural, even this is no final answer. The word must be exchanged for another greater and more vital, just as supernatural but more practical and powerful.

If we examine one of these visions we shall find that the essential feature is not the lamp, the ladder, nor the bush. These are more or less indifferent to the essential fact. The essential fact is that a divine Person is talking with a human being. The personal is the real supernatural.

Personality is the greatest, most real, most practical word yet born into the language of man. The real God must be personal; for only a person can speak, and a God who cannot speak for himself is no God.

Sometimes we speak for God and shape him by our definitions. This is the God of our books, and he can take excellent care of our books. But the God who takes care of me must speak for himself, must have no sponsor. He must speak for himself and to me if he mold me into his own likeness. Kipling touches the point with supreme sarcasm. "Tomlinson" has gone to heaven and they won't have him. He goes to hell and they won't have him there.

He is finally sent back to earth with the grewsome benediction, "And the God that you took from a printed book be with you, Tomlinson!"

Also the truly practical God must be personal. There is nothing on earth so practical as personal force. We sometimes say of a man he knows enough, or he is good enough, but he can't do it. He lacks that something we call personal force; that something that makes things go; that something that does all the originating, the creative work in among the things of earth; that something that finds for its largest, highest, holiest field of operation not things but *men*. When the one perfect Personality of all history was here on earth it was found that the supreme art of his life was to reproduce himself in others, to lift men to the level of God.

Now, at the heart of the Hebrew vision there was a personal God brooding over humanity, as the eagle broods over her young. The eagle broods over, stirs up, and thrusts forth her young that they may become like herself. So God broods over, stirs up, and thrusts out his men that they may become like himself.

"We go to prove our soul." A personal God

hovers around the soul as a mother hovers around her child. They tell me that the child reared in an incubator lacks the personal qualities and development of the child who has been under the personal care of a mother. Personality is born of personality. We love him because he first loved us. The sequence is not of logic but of life. Said a kindergarten teacher who has under her a class of institutional children: "O those institutional children! they are like sticks, so dull, so unresponsive, so meaningless. I would rather have the dirtiest street child that has been evoked and evolved by a mother's care."

Personal development is born of a brooding personality. Deeper than the genius of a people, than all her inherited traits; deeper than her environment, whether of nature, history, or literature, is the force of a personal God in evoking and evolving personal life in men; drawing them out and up into self-mastery; breathing into them a keener sensitiveness, alive and responsive to every human voice; flooding them with a richness and fullness of life that is forever breaking its boundaries and sweeping into the future with immortal forecasts. It is this exhaustless wealth of personal

life that puts the world forever under tribute to man.

"All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount:
Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped:
All I could never be,
All men ignored in me,
This was I worth to God."

Now, let this idea of personality be carried into our life more definitely. It is often, and truly, said that the great proof of the inspiration of the Bible is that it inspires. Yet, like most epigrams, the phrase will bear some qualification. There are other books that inspire us. They inspire us with great thoughts, with true morals, with artistic fervor. But at the heart of the Bible there is something more than morals, truth, or beauty. There is a divine Personality. The inspiration of the Bible is more than the inspiration of the true, the good, or the beautiful; it is the inspiration of Personality. It is more than an inspirational power, it is a redeeming power. It redeems us not simply to the true, the beautiful, and the good;

it redeems us from self-centered individualities into living, loving, God-centered personalities. It transforms us from a whirlpool into a fountain.

Personality is not only the last word to be said about God, it is the last word to be said about us. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This is the goal, the perfect person. The goal is not doctrinal but personal. And as we rise more and more toward that supreme goal we shall rise in power. What kind of power? Personal power. What is the Holy Spirit but the personal force of God? And it is for this we perish. It is this personal force, this Holy Spirit, whereof our nerves are scant.

Our lives are made up of so many strange, incongruous fragments. We gather ourselves in from the four corners of the world. George MacDonald's catechism of babyhood is not astray, after all:

> "Where did you come from, baby dear?
> Out of the everywhere into here.
> Where did you get those eyes so blue?
> Out of the sky as I came through."

So we pick ourselves up along the way. We are not a chip off the old block, as we used to

say. We are chips off a good many blocks. Some are old and some are new; some of the street and some of the schools; some of the market and some of the home.

And the real problem of life is to achieve personal unity; to find the spiritual bond that will bind all the fragments into one magnificent and masterly whole. Personalize every chip. Make every part throb with personal force.

There are two movements in life: one the gathering in, the individualizing; the other the sending out, the personalizing. What comes in never goes back the same: what comes in as earth, air, sun, and dew returns in leaf, bud, and blossom. So into our life come the fragments to be sent back again, but never the same. They are to be personalized; tinged by the soul; sent back throbbing with personal force, with the Spirit of God.

Our life is gathered into the individual to be returned again in the universal, in the gospel for all men. Here is a pansy, gathering itself into certain colors and forms. What does it return? Not its individuality, not its color, not its form; but something more common, and yet more precious: beauty and fragrance, a gospel for all men. And here is a young man fresh

from the schools with his medal, his diploma, his degree. What can he do with them? Can he take the medal and pierce it through and through with his personal force till he has personalized it?—transmuted it into coin that enriches the souls of men? Can he rise to the level of a prince and strew his way with the largess of personal powers?

Then what of his diploma, this dusty old parchment! Can he take this document and make it live again, as the genius takes some ancient tale and breathes into it new life—weaves his personality through and through it till it throbs with an undying power? Can he take this dry parchment and weave his personality through and through it—make it tell the great story of the cross?

Then he has been graduated to a certain degree. He has been graduated; now as he steps down into the world what is to be his graduating power, his personal force? Will he be able to graduate bootblacks, newsboys, and street arabs into manhood? Will he have the power to graduate the hopeless into hope, the weak into strength, the foolish into wisdom, and the bad into good?

What is his personal force? This is the

supreme question of life, that which makes the difference between success and failure. This is the supreme factor in the nation's life, that by which she rises into divine vigor. This is the supreme factor in human history, that by which she climbs the rugged heights of progress.

The woman of Samaria came to the well a mere drawer of water. She went out from the presence of Christ an exhaustless fountain springing up into everlasting life. It is on the flood tide of personalities that history is lifted through the ages.

HISTORY

The Kiss of Destiny

"Once to every man and nation comes a moment to decide."—*Lowell.*

"But the unit of the visit,
The encounter of the wise—
Say what other meter is it
Than the meeting of the eyes?"

—*Emerson.*

"History is the essence of innumerable biographies."
—*Carlyle.*

THE KISS OF DESTINY

"Kiss the Son."—Psa. ii, 12.

THIS psalm is a temple of history built by the genius of a poet; just such a temple as such a genius could build out of any modern city.

In the outer court the human is rampant, scheming, jostling, urging, building its splendid vanities; while in the very midst of the surging crowd, like a seething volcano, human passion chafes against every divine restraint. The wild human cry rises above the uproar of the jostling crowd: "Let us break their bands asunder."

Pass through this outer court into the next and the scene is changed. The tumult of the human gives place to the calm of God. There is a throne, there is order, there is life. On the throne is a King, and on his lips an edict: "Ask of me, and I will give you the nations"—God giving the world to his Son.

In the outer court all is confusion, all is fermentation. In the inner court the builders are at work, the structure is growing.

But there is yet another court, still more interior, throbbing with the life and love and

beauty of the Son of God; life's holy of holies, where the whole destiny of man is reduced to one sentence: "Kiss the Son." "Give your allegiance to him." All life, all history, hangs upon this individual act.

In the outer court we get such a view as we would get were we to lift the roofs and look down into some modern hells. Indeed, we need not go so deep, for what seems a maddening maze has much human method underneath.

Suppose we lift the roof from the political wigwam, the senate chamber, and the market place; from the council chamber of kings and theologians and thinkers. We shall find at least no placid lake. True, we are in the presence of thought. The kings are taking council, the people are meditating, but the product is vanity.

What an amount of thinking, scheming, planning, we do, all the way from kings down to peasants! What brains we wear out! What logic we weary in concocting systems that burst like a bubble! If the time we spend in scheming vanities were taken from our life what would be left?

We work and dig and delve and twist like the old deacon at his "one hoss shay" that was to

last forever. For, he said, since things break in the weakest spot, make one part as strong as the other and it never can break. For logic is logic. And behold it went down in a lump, broke like a bubble.

So men have wrought at many a "shay"—creeds, doctrines, systems. They have put in their lifeblood, gone to the stake; made them to last forever—eternal, they call them. Yet we won't have them to-day. They are stowed in the lumber room of modern thought. "Our little systems have their day."

Still, there is a value in all this vanity building. The blowing of a bubble expands the lungs, and the lungs are worth more than the bubble. And the blowing of intellectual bubbles expands the brain, yes, the soul, and that is the main thing. For men are more than systems.

There is much in the old man's reply in *Alice in Wonderland*. When asked how he could manage to eat such hard things considering his age—

> " 'In my youth,' said the father,
> 'I took to the law,
> And argued each case with my wife,
> And the muscular strength it gave to my jaw
> Has lasted the rest of my life.' "

The spiritual strength that has come to the soul, the larger man, that is the supreme value. Yet every human system takes us a certain distance. We must have them, though they are not through lines. The only through line is the great living way of God.

But in this outer court there is another voice not from the council chamber but from the mob: "Let us break their bands." This is the revolt of passions, the vortex of democracy.

We believe in our democratic creeds, yet it takes much faith to stand the strain. What a seething world lies about us! What a breaking of cords! New wine breaking the old bottles, poor wine too.

"Laissez faire" is the cry. Forms are broken, boundaries ignored, rights overrun. Things are dissolved in the fervent heat of the times. Life is trying its latent energies with every latest fad. No book, no day, no ancient law is strong enough to hold, curb, control this modern giant of democracy. So it seems, at least. And it would be folly to attempt an immediate special, far-reaching remedy; to say what ought to be done to put the world soberly on its feet; to suggest some *coup d'état*.

We simply look out upon a scene of fer-

mentation. We must take it as it is. But if fermentation be the true word we are most fortunate; for if the world be in a ferment something must be *brewing*. What is it? What is brewing below the surface? What shall we find in the inner court?

This psalm is no mere poem. The author goes deeper than the surface. He commands the X-rays of inspiration and pierces the troubled exterior. He brings us into the presence of a throne. God's throne is out of sight, beneath the people, for he would make every man king. His empire is ruled from the deep and silent heart of things. His courtiers, his couriers, his armies wear an invisible livery. The world has a trumpet voice, God speaks in whispers. Crime cries itself hoarse, goodness works with its mouth shut. The news, the strange, the abnormal, makes much ado speeding its telegraphic way through the world. But the good news is dispatched through the invisible telegraphy of God.

God's builders are out of sight. God's throne is at the heart of the wild world. On it sits his Son, and to him he is slowly giving the nations. "He shall break them like a potter's vessel." The old vessels that held the vanities and pas-

sions of earth, vessels of wrath—these are being broken and shaped again on the wheel of God for truth divine and the passion of the cross.

But to enter more closely into the divine council. We have seen how our thought structures collapse. This is equally true of all human structures: families, tribes, castes, nations. No human art or artifice can save them from the inevitable.

The decay of the favored classes in all ages is one of the facts of history. And the philosopher who once sought the elixir of life for the individual is to-day seeking the same elixir for the clan, class, or race. Why those upon whom the greatest advantages have been bestowed should decline is the problem. The best and most comprehensive answer given is perhaps this: "That man is made for progress through struggle. When, therefore, the object for which we strive is attained, when the top is reached, when the boundary of social distinction is touched, when we have reached the ranks of the most favored and cease to struggle, then we begin to recede, decay, perish." What, therefore, we need is some condition that will put us under the strain of an immortal strife.

Now, when the Son sets his throne down in the world such a struggle begins, a new struggle. Take our own life: we came to him striving to find something, to get something; we found him, when, behold, the struggle is reversed. Now the effort is to give, to speak, to express. We came to draw water from the well; the struggle was to bring it from the cool, living depths. Now we go out a well in ourself, striving to give—"a fountain springing up unto everlasting life." We come with the human want, we go forth with the divine fullness.

Henceforth we are under the law of supply and demand. We hear again and again from the divine-human traveler, "Give me to drink." This, on every side, is the cry of our eager, restless, wayward humanity, "Give me to drink." This is the cry of the soul, with its myriad wants. Give what? Give all you are, the best you are. Give books, give art, give knowledge, give conditions, give life, give God. The demand is immortal, and so is the supply. The struggle is divine, is altruistic.

A recent writer has said that all human progress is made by a constant replenishing from a fund of *altruistic feeling*. This is very true,

but where is the fund deposited? Have we access to the bank? On this question philosophy is vague, but our psalm is definite. "Kiss the Son." Give him your allegiance. History in its last analysis is individual. A world of men, of free moral agents, must always move by units. "Kiss the Son." All the world revolves around this personal center. Here is the depository of the altruistic feeling by which the world moves.

Without depreciating questions of national breadth with which the air is always charged—questions great and grave—let us not forget that this one question is world-wide, is universal; that upon it hinges all human progress—this individual relation of man to the supreme Hero of human destiny.

No clan, class, or nation can ever be saved by a readjustment of social conditions. No measuring up to the conventional standards about us is sufficient. The call is to heroism, nothing less. "Not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing," the divine renewing.

If, as social students tell us, the aristocracy of Europe, or, indeed, of any other country, be decaying, this, and this alone, is the elixir with which to restore their depleted life.

When a man kisses the Son, when there is an interchange of eyes, an interflow of soul, a hero is born. He is stung with a divine ambition—the ambition to give himself, to pour out his life. The immortal possibility of a personality is open to the world. This is the world's true leadership.

"Kiss the Son." This in the present tense. Now is the crisis of life. This is forever true. The greatest mistake of our thinking has always been to put God too far back, leaving the world a sort of cosmic machine grinding out its mechanical career; or else to put God too far forward, leaving the world a sort of chaotic concourse striving in vain to overtake its Maker.

Missing the present God has always been the failure of life. This was the failure of the Hebrew people. On that memorable day, that looked so like other days, yet was full of God, as he walked in their midst they were still saying, "God has been here, and he will come again." But they failed, utterly failed, to grasp the great fact of his presence here and now.

"And the choice went by forever
'Twixt the darkness and that light."

Have we not learned from the whole teaching of Revelation, now so strongly reaffirmed by science, that we are walking in a world overflowing with God? that every moment, every hour, every day is flooded with the divine Presence? and that this is the real "tide which, taken at its flood," leads on to destiny? Therefore, "Kiss the Son." "To-day, if ye will hear his voice." If the heroic call has come awake, arise, go forth, for it is the voice of the divine Hero.

LIFE

The Voices

"Like an Æolian harp that wakes
No certain air, but overtakes
Far thought with music that it makes:

"Such seemed the whisper at my side:
'What is it thou knowest, sweet voice?' I cried.
'A hidden hope,' the voice replied,

"So heavenly-toned, that in that hour
From out my sullen heart a power
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower,

"To feel, although no tongue can prove,
That every cloud, that spreads above
And veileth love, itself is love."

"A still small voice spake unto me,
'Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be?'

"Then to the still small voice I said:
'Let me not cast in endless shade
What is so wonderfully made.

" 'Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly longed for death.

" ' 'Tis life whereof our nerves are scant—
O life, not death, for which we pant;
More life and fuller, that I want.'

"A second voice was at mine ear,
A little whisper silver-clear,
A murmur, 'Be of better cheer.' "

THE VOICES

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness."—Isa. xl, 3.

For many years the literary merit as well as spiritual power of these Isaiahan chapters, from the fortieth on, has been steadily growing upon the minds of readers. A quarter of a century ago Matthew Arnold put them into book form, following the authorized text, with a very strongly appreciative preface. Led on by the literary charm, he found his way into the deeper spiritual significance of the scripture.

It is always the mission of literature to carry a message of life, a message for the heart. This whole scripture is a message from the heart of God to the heart of man. Indeed, the passage generally translated, "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem," is better rendered, "Speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem."

Science and philosophy have no heart message. It takes literature to reach the heart. For literature is born of the heart. It utters the unutterable. It is the outburst of personality. When literature adopts the finer, subtler forms of expression it is no affectation, but a serious

attempt to get from one heart to another; to utter the highest, holiest truth of the soul.

It is hard to express the deepest things in us. Lyman Beecher used to say, "If I could play all that I hear inside of me I could beat Paganini." And again, "I am sick because I cannot reveal the feelings of my heart." Great souls speak from compulsion. They speak under pressure of the heart, and from the heart to the heart.

"When some wild emotion
Strikes the ocean
Of the poet's soul, ere long
From each rocky cave and fastness
In its vastness
Floats the fragment of a song."

And this Bible, the literature of God, the outflow of the divine personality, clad in every possible form, rushes with spiritual power from the heart of God to the heart of man—from heart to heart. Here in these chapters of Isaiah, where the spirit of God burns into a flame of redeeming love, it naturally takes on its noblest literary form. Every art of expression lends itself to the divine purpose. Rhapsody and drama, poetry and pleading, oratory and argument, blending in spiritual unity and

purpose, press into the heart of man with life—life larger, nobler, diviner.

There is first the voice scene. Voices are speeding across the desert. Life, real life, that begins where mere existence leaves off, begins with a voice; not a word well defined and elaborated into a creed, but just a voice—some one calling, we hardly know as yet whither. All great lives have heard voices—Moses and Abraham, Samuel and Isaiah, John, Luther, and Mazzini.

The voice of life may at least be defined thus far: It calls us to be something, or, better, some one; to distinguish or differentiate ourselves; to come out and be separate; to be more than a conventional automaton; to be ourself; to be something that is I, and not a part of the crowd; to be an individual. This ambition prompts the small boy to show off; to differentiate himself from the company; the young fellows to break over conventional boundaries and shock people; and literary geniuses sometimes to revolt against the existing order of things.

There is, however, a true distinction, a true individualizing of life. It is not by doing something eccentric, not by shocking the world, nor

by revolting against the existing order; not to be different, but better; not in a new species, but an improvement on the old, carrying life a step further along the main way. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord:" that man away ahead cutting out the brush, picking out the stones, leveling down the mountains, filling up the valleys, turning the wilderness of man into the highway of God.

This is the true call, the real distinction of life—glorifying the commonplaces. Some books we love, not because the author has done something strange, wild, eccentric, but because he has taken us into some commonplace home of poverty and through the dull light and tear-stained faces has revealed the glory of a human heart lit with the light of God. He glorifies the commonplaces. He is on ahead. This is true distinction, real individuality.

Moses distinguished himself by going on ahead of his people. Sometimes they did not know where he was. He was quite out of sight. He, too, glorified the commonplaces with those great first principles of life, preparing the way of God.

Sometimes true distinction becomes degenerate. A man distinguishes himself, and his

grandchildren are content to rest upon his laurels. This is the birth of caste. Spirit gives place to form. Abraham rose far above his age in fellowship with God. But the best his descendants could say for themselves was that they were his children.

Moses discovered the first principles of life, but how soon they were turned for caste purposes into a thousand petty rules! Every true revival is a passing on into spiritual distinction. Afterward comes the period of rules, religious castes, ecclesiastical machinery. These two phases of life are forever at loggerheads. Throughout the Bible they run counter: life sliding down into caste, petty, narrow, cruel; and life struggling upward, strong, broad, spiritual.

What a picture of these counter currents we have in Job's life! Around him are his conventional ultra-orthodox friends, wiser than the Almighty. They weigh the man in their little scales of human logic as they talk of what ought to be, what must be, and what cannot be. Meantime Job is struggling, groping, living his way, following the voices beyond all boundaries and conclusions, till out of sight of his friends on the unseen heights of God he finally cries,

"I know that my Redeemer liveth." This is the outburst of spiritual experience, the shout of victory, the thrill of individual life.

But life is not under the simple sway of one clear voice. There are many voices—many and discordant. We have to find our way through the voices. One voice is heard calling across the desert to another, saying, "Take up the message and carry it forward. Cry!" But the other voice calls back, "What shall I cry? What is the use of crying?" "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; and the people are grass."

This is the voice of despair. We rush down into the world to the blooming flower. "A thing of beauty is a joy forever." Nay; we pluck it, and, behold, to-morrow it is faded and gone. Such is life.

"The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,
Of wailing winds, and naked woods, and meadows brown and sear.
Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the autumn leaves lie dead;
They rustle to the eddying gust and to the rabbit's tread."

The poets are prone to these pessimistic moods. Shelley, Schiller, and Byron have sung this despair. They have answered back to the

voice of hope, "What shall we cry?—the grass withereth, the flower fadeth."

We have tried to escape this pessimistic voice in two directions. One has been to plunge into the world. "Eat, drink, for to-morrow you die." Make the most of the world while it is going, which is not always making the best of it. The other is to turn away from the fading, disappointing world: to lose sight of this world, to despise it; to live in the thought of another world. Both are fruitless and false ways to escape.

But there is another way. The voice of despair dies out, and another voice takes up the cry. Yes, he repeats, "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever."

There is something that never fades, never withers—the word of God. Where is it? Not in some other world, but in this. Go back to the flower: there is something even in the flower that never dies.

> "To me the meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

The flower may fade, but its message will live forever.

Men are not doubters, despairers, because

they think deeply, but because they do not think deeply enough. They do not get through to the sap, the heart, where the eternals live and flow. They stop in the foliage, and the foliage withers and dies. The wisest thinking is just the art of connecting the foliage with the perennial sap of eternity.

The word of God is in the flower, yes, in the grass, in all the commonplaces of life, if we can but find it. The sheep gets the best out of the grass by nipping it, but we do not. It is not by ownership, but by fellowship, that we get the best things of life. We must linger around and listen for the word. Not by owning the flowers, but by associating with them. If we have lost faith in men it may be because we have tried to pluck them, possess them, rather than associate with them, listening for the divine message they bring, consciously or unconsciously. It is not necessary to be millionaires, but woe to the man who ceases to be a fellow.

"All things must die:
The stream will cease to flow;
The wind will cease to blow;
The clouds will cease to fleet;
The heart will cease to beat;
For all things must die."

Yet dying, like Christ on Calvary, they leave behind their message from God. You will remember how "Blue Bird" was reclaimed from her reckless life to God and his service by a flower thrust into her hand by a woman. It faded, but in dying spoke—spoke to her heart, "gave thoughts that lie too deep for tears."

But another voice is now heard, a voice that grows wild with enthusiasm, calling upon Zion to take up the message: "O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!"

"Behold your God!" Here is something even better than the "word." It is God himself; the gospel of the Presence—richer than all words. There is a gospel of the Presence.

This man speaks fluently and logically. We listen with admiration, and wonder if it is true. This other man seems a pauper in words, but he comes to us with a presence that convinces at sight. He speaks with authority. This philosopher whom we sought in our trouble muddled us with his wisdom. This wise man who said almost nothing but seemed to bring our tangle into the light of his presence sent us out a clearer-headed and stronger-hearted man.

It is the Presence that saves—the real Presence. The Bible is not simply a message from God, but a revelation of God. It takes us into his presence, deeper and deeper. It is not the word simply, clear-cut, cold, lifeless. It is the word while he is yet speaking; his breath, his life, his Spirit is in it. This is the life power of the book.

We live deeper than flowers, deeper than words—we live in experiences; in the secret places of life beyond the word—deeper, much deeper, where speech removes its shoes for reverence and thought hangs furled; where the mother waits, where the father prays, where the young man finds the meaning of his soul and girds himself for life—in the presence of God.

This is the democracy, this the liberty, this the range of life—that it is rooted in an experience. It is an experience between two persons, God and me. This is life.

"All I know of a certain star
Is, it can throw (like an angled spar)
Now a dart of red, now a dart of blue;
Till my friends have said they would fain see, too,
My star that dartles the red and the blue!
Then it stopped like a bird; like a flower hangs furled:
They must solace themselves with the Saturn above it.
What matter to me if their star is a world?
Mine has opened its soul to me, therefore I love it."

LIFE

The Mission

"Life is not an idle ore,
But iron dug from central gloom
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipped in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the shocks of doom,
To shape and use."—*Tennyson.*

"Be sure that God
Ne'er dooms to waste the strength he deigns impart."
—*Browning.*

"God is the author, men are only the players. These grand pieces which are played upon earth have been composed in heaven."—*Balzac.*

THE MISSION

"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."—Isa. xl, 31.

THE voices left us in the presence of God—life an experience. The evolution of this experience into life's mission occupies the succeeding chapters. True, there is an almost perplexing variety of thought, form, and action flashing from this scripture, yet through it all may be traced the unfolding of one purpose.

The voices were idealistic; these chapters are realistic. We have passed from the idyllic shepherd scene into the heart of a great city. Getting out of Babylon is the problem; not a problem in history, but in life. There is history in it. Cyrus is matched against Babylon. There is the clash of arms, and the city falls. But, strange to say, there arises above the conquered city not the form of Cyrus, but of Israel—a new Israel waking and rising slowly to the great purpose of God and the great mission of life.

It is more than a rescue. We sometimes stop with that idea of salvation, but God never does. Israel was a wreck, but God treats her rather as

a magnificent possibility. This is his treatment of all human wrecks; he never forgets that he is preeminently a builder and maker of men. The brand plucked from the burning never tells the whole story of salvation. Longfellow has a little poem of an artist who, sitting one day by the fire, snatched a brand from the hearth, then finally carved it into a work of art. God plucked Israel from the burning—to carve, to bring out the true life, the divine purpose, the likeness of God, that God through him might "break into glory." And this work, this fine art of God, is what we have in these chapters of Isaiah, wrought out through his presence—the thought of this passage—"They that wait upon the Lord."

It was an awful change for those people to be taken up from the simple shepherd life and dropped into the heart of the world's civilization. A boy taken from a country home and dropped into a city realizes for the first time how big the world is, how overwhelming is man—these streets throbbing with commerce, these buildings shutting out the sky, this whir of factories, this babel of voices. Why! God in the country hardly seems equal to man in the city. He feels, like the Israelite, that his ways

are hidden from the God of the old meeting-house on the hill—that God has lost track of him.

And we are always passing through this experience. We are being dropped from an age of simplicity into an age of complexity and perplexity—from the little province into the metropolis; from the hill country into Babylon. Suddenly the world is upon us so big, so ruthless, so irreverent. Science has pushed the old boundaries in upon the country of God. Commerce has run her tracks through the ancient sanctuaries. The world is rushing on with such speed that we have no chance to "possess our souls in patience." We are caught in the whirl of thought, in the torrent of things. We are being made in spite of ourselves—factory-made in the mill of modern civilization. And our soul is oozing from us through hoe and chisel, through pen and pencil, through science, commerce, and art.

To a people in such straits came the prophet with a message. What was it? Just this: Your world is not too big, but your idea of God is too little. The transcendency of God. You have thought of him as the God of the shepherd land. But let man enlarge his world, let him

widen the circles beyond all former thought; still it is "God who sitteth upon the last circle."

Some prophets to-day take us through the almost unending stages of evolution, to bring us at last face to face with the Almighty sitting upon the ultimate circle. All this great new land is still God's country, not man's. And the length and breadth of it, and the wonderfulness of the exploration, have only given us a nobler idea of God. And from this must be born a nobler idea of man.

When your heart beats low from too much world, when you need a heavenly tonic, turn to this fortieth chapter of Isaiah. The transcendency of God shines through every word: "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? . . . He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

From the transcendency of God is born the

transcendency of man. The man who waits upon God is touched and tinged with the supremacy of God. To him the world is the pathway of the soul—the great highway of God where everything bows to the mastery of man, where everything is hands and feet and wings for the soul. A favorite thought of the prophet, this sovereignty of the soul that waits upon God. The rivers cannot overflow him. For him the trees break into song. At his approach the desert blossoms as a rose, and the stagnant pools are turned into living fountains.

And even more than this, along this highway of the soul not only does the earth wait upon God's courtier, but the heavens too. This is the thought of the prophet. All along the way the heavens are bursting with songs. There are choirs invisible. Israel sings and the watchmen on the walls sing. "The heavens are filled" —not with commerce, but with song.

There is a picture by Breton, a good supplement for "The Man with the Hoe." A peasant girl, bareheaded, barefooted, sickle in hand, is going forth to her toil. Suddenly a lark breaks into song above her. She stops, her head thrown back, her lips apart, her face aglow, her eye beaming. For the moment she has forgot-

ten the world, "all time and toil and care." This is the divine remedy for a material age, for an aggressive world—not the entire abolition of the hoe and the sickle, but more larks above; not less earth, but more sky; songs that inspire, ideals that lift, standards that are divine. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."

But waiting upon God is more than an inspiration; it is a criticism of life. God is the supreme critic. Life is moral; therefore is always on trial, always at the judgment bar of God. Judgment is not simply a far-off event, it is a process forever going on. And this very thought runs through these chapters. The nations are in the court of God, are on trial before him.

This is the deepest current of history in all ages. It is also the deepest current of life. We live by judgment. The soul through which the judgments of God are not always sweeping is dead. We live by the searching light of God. When you lift a stone in the field the beetles rush to cover, because they love darkness rather than light. So God dispels the moral beetles of the soul by pouring in the light, new light, stronger and whiter.

Every day we are called to stand in some new light. The fatal charge against the Jews was not that they were false to the old light, but that they would not receive the new. This is the soul's fatality, that the new light comes and we refuse the test, the trial. Real life, growing, expanding, is forever passing from judgment hall to judgment hall.

Then judgment is also in events, the tests of life. His fan is in his hand, and we are in the fan. And as the farmer tosses wheat and chaff into the air to be caught and separated by a blast of wind, so God tosses the soul in the experiences of life. Every toss into prominence is a test, a trial. A new wind catches us and there is less chaff. God is looking for the wheat. "Bringing forth judgment unto truth." Not truth in the abstract, not a creed, but truth in the head and heart, in the hands and feet, truth all alive.

So judgment sweeps through the soul. The selfish thought is doomed. The unholy purpose is condemned. The lust is cast into hell. The idols of earth perish, and the ideals of heaven are born. Babylon falls, and the servant of God rises in her place.

This is election or selection according to

quality. We are elected if we pass muster, if we are equal to the trial, if we can stand the test, if we can measure up. But measure up to what? To the purpose of God in us. This is the great appeal of life, the purpose of God sweeping down through the ages. This is the logic of the Bible, this the great theme of Paul, this the awakening thought of our prophet. "Jacob, I have called thee." "Israel, I have chosen thee." "I have taken hold of thee from the ends of the earth," away back in Abraham.

The modern doctrine of heredity is forestalled by the prophet and made to serve a noble end, to lift life into larger meaning. Life is no little circle, no side issue, no spider's web in the corner for purposes of spoil. Life is a succession of princes—that is, if we grasp it as it lies in the purpose of God. We are called to stand in a noble succession. Grasping this thought is life's power, failing it is life's defeat.

We are heirs if we only knew it. One day in a western village an old Indian was found begging through the streets. Suspended from his neck was a charm; when opened it was found to contain a deed from the government for a large tract of land. So our life holds deeds, legacies, birthrights that we have never

claimed. We go a begging when we might be princes. We are overwhelmed, overrun, swamped by the world. We live, yet not we, but the world liveth in us, when, were we to rise to the purpose of God in us, to the purpose of God revealed through the Prince of Life, we should pass from beggardom to princedom. We should then rise to that heroic scripture that brings the world into homage to the soul: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God."

But, more definitely, what is the purpose of God in Israel? What is her mission? A strange one, very strange. A mission of light: "Thou shalt be a light to the nations." A mission of words: "Thou shalt succor the weary with words." A mission of gentleness: "A bruised reed shall he not break." A mission of silence: "He shall not lift up his voice in the street."

What is all this but the mission of the soul, the soul forces—the mission of what we are to the world, of what we are poured forth in words, deeds, and life?

But the practical question arises, how to achieve this mission, how to unfold the soul,

how to reveal ourself. This is really the most difficult question in life. We are conscious of something within, but it is a mystery; a vague force pushing and urging, we know not whither. There is no clear-cut scripture of God's purpose within us.

We are like a boy who feels the life of manhood within him, restless, vague, impetuous, and he knows not what to do with it. One day on a stagecoach I watched such a boy for half an hour. In that time he ate some bananas, and sat on some peaches; inadvertently wiped his feet on an old gentleman who sat near; swung by a strap over the wheels when we were going down hill; and finally put on the brake when we were going up.

How like the vague and restless life of our own soul! Active, but foolishly and disastrously active. The brakes on uphill, and off downhill. Active, but no definite unfolding of the inner purpose. Rather, a wasting of that purpose; bartering the soul for success, selling thoughts for money, peddling conscience for fame, surrendering character for popularity—"losing the soul to gain the world."

The severest test of life is, "To thine own self be true." Still the question remains, How?

How can I be true to my own soul? How can I stand by my own wares? How can I have faith in my own powers? And the answer comes again from the passage, "They that wait upon the Lord."

The flower unfolds its divine purpose in the presence of the sun, and the soul in the presence of God.

"God's plans like lilies pure and white unfold:
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart;
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold."

LIFE

The Hero

"Our own best and noblest life, our own greatest heroism, interprets for us God's love."—*Abbott.*

"The very God! think, Abib; dost thou think?
So the All-great were the All-loving, too—
So through the thunder comes a human voice,
Saying, 'O heart I made, a heart beats here!
Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
Thou hast no power, nor mayest conceive of mine,
But love I gave thee with myself to love,
And thou must love me who have died for thee!' "
—*Browning.*

THE HERO

"Behold, my servant shall prosper."—Isa. lii, 13.
"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."—Isa. liii, 11.

Our prophet now takes us still deeper into the mysteries of life. In the last chapter we found life unfolding in God's presence—unfolding God's purpose within us, the mission of what we are to the world.

It was a study of life from the standpoint of man. Now the prophet takes us within the veil—to the standpoint of God, to a revelation of the mysteries of life, to the dynamics of the soul. "My servant shall prosper." "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."

Life from God's standpoint is always a mastery for higher ends, an incessant travail for new and finer issues. The elements may swirl around a rock and pass on; but when they touch a living tree they are caught and held and turned to nobler things. Earth, air, and dew return in leaf, bud, and blossom.

A brook may gather the debris of a hundred cottages and sweep them into an eddy, there to play out their meaningless existence. But a boy

will gather the debris of one cottage, screws, nails, sticks, etc., grasp them, turn upon them the force of his individuality; and return them to the world with a new and higher meaning—a miniature house, barn, or mill. With the boy there is more than a battle with sticks. There is an actual travail of soul to express himself in sticks, screws, and nails. Every power of the soul is taxed—insight, sympathy, will. That little mill with its wabbling wheels could tell a strange and pathetic story of the travail of a boy's soul.

Or, again, there is that piece of machinery—the product of mature skill—that runs so rhythmically and silently that one might think it made in heaven and dropped into this discordant earth. It, too, has its story deeper than the heart of the mountain, the flame of the forge, or the skill of the workman; a story that leads into the depths of the inventor's soul; into days and nights of poverty and toil, of hardship and disappointment, of weary waiting and hard working; a travail of soul known only to one man and his God, as he wrestles with principles that baffle, with steel that resists, with ideals that elude.

And that snatch of the poet's song, that

flutters like an angel into our heart, is no handiwork of technique. It, too, is a child of the soul.

"Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate."

What depths of life are back of such a sentence! What sorrows and heartaches, what vigils and toil, before the poet could write such words. Thrust your rapier into them, as Mrs. Browning suggests, and you will find blood upon it.

This is the great secret of the masters; this their only divinity; this their only genius. Carlyle says of Shakespeare: "It seems to me a heedless notion, our common one, that he sat like a bird on the bough and sang forth free and offhand. Doubt not he had his own sorrows. How could a man travel forward from rustic deer-poaching to such tragedy-writing and not fall in with sorrows by the way?"

It is by sheer travail of the soul, the age-long travail of the human soul, that all constitutions, inventions, poems, and pictures are born into this world. Indeed, was it not in such travail of the Infinite Soul that the world itself was born? Is not this the real creative power? Is it not the genius of God?

We have too often held the notion that God makes worlds as a boy blows bubbles; that all these precious things of earth and the soul cost him nothing. A most unworthy thought of God. As one has truly said, "As long as we conceive him as bestowing blessings upon us out of his infinite fullness, but at no real cost to himself, he sinks below the moral heroes of our race."

If things are true and beautiful and good it is because so much of the Eternal Soul has gone into them; just as the soul of the artist goes into a picture—the only thing that makes it a real picture. The flowers you bring into the sick room are touched into life by the Infinite love. They are expressions of the divine passion, tokens of the divine sympathy and thoughtfulness. If a landscape lifts the soul it is because there is soul in it; for it takes a soul to move a soul.

When we read, "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," we are not to think of the waving of a magician's wand, nor the ripple of the waters moved by the winds. Into this creative act goes all that we name personality—thought, feeling, will, all bending and burning toward one creative pas-

sion, the passion of love, of sacrifice, of giving; a passion that will never stay till it expresses itself in history, till it speaks in blood through the throbbing life of a Man, and of whom it will be most truly said, "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." And his coming into history will be explained by the fact that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." All this is but the sequence of the Infinite travail, of the creative passion making all things new—yes, finally new, a new creation in Christ Jesus.

Now, it is this very thought we find in these most remarkable chapters of Isaiah from the fortieth on—chapters that fairly throb with what has been called the "passion of God." The objective point is the captive people. The voices have carried the message of hope to them. "Behold, God will come with a strong hand." Then he comes. Comes with a strong hand, but a strange one—strange to the common thought of men. You see him coming, you feel his approach in the rising tide of the chapters.

"Jehovah as hero goes forth
As a man of war stirs up zeal,
Shouts the alarm and battle cry
Against his foes, proves himself hero."

But this deliverer going forth is more than a human, he is a divine Hero. His redemption is divine, not human. It is an outpouring of himself, in arguments, in judgments, in awakening thoughts, in passionate pleading. In all the burning eloquence of God he pours life into their impoverished veins, thoughts into their stupid minds, and love into their wasted hearts. He pours himself out till the limits of language are reached and a strange silence falls. In the midst of the people a strange figure appears, one so strange that the world is amazed, kings are dumb, and the people aghast. What has not been heard, what has not been said, what can never be said, is here. It is the ultimate expression of the divine passion; the silent Servant of Jehovah in the midst of his task, in the travail of his soul.

To the world—to those who have not felt the significance of our own divinity; who have not learned that it is only by the travail of our soul, only by sacrifice, that personal force can reach anything like a creative function, only

through our Gethsemanes and Calvaries can we make the world flower about us—to the world, I say, he is a strange, bruised, wounded, and disfigured form. But to God he is the prosperous servant. "He shall prosper." More literally, "He has the insight and ability of destiny."

He sees man at those strange, mysterious depths unpierced by any human eye. He will seek out—trace thought by thought, feeling by feeling, purpose by purpose—the destiny of the soul. He will discover, unearth, redeem the soul from circumstance, fate, and sin.

What is sin but chaos of soul? What is sin but stubbornness of heart? What is sin but discord of life? What is sin but the wayward will? And He, moving upon the face of the wild human waters, in the sublime travail of his soul shall turn chaos into order, stubbornness into obedience, discord into music, and self-will into divine.

We are brought in the next chapter face to face with the hero at his task. The revelation comes in the form of a human experience. Once more humanity is grappling with the Angel of life, an experience repeated again and again in every soul that wakens to the meaning of life—the same dazed unbelief; "Who has

believed—to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" the same turning away of the face: "There is no beauty in him;" and the same final awakening to the fact that all beauty and all divinity and all power is in that bruised and wounded form.

We begin life where the race began by worshiping the sun. We believe in the beauty of curves, the divinity of fists, and the heaven of enjoyment. Our idea of the divine power is force multiplied infinitely. We have not yet learned the weakness of mere force. A giant may crush a flower with his heel, but there is no power in his heel to nurse it back to life. That takes soul power. The power that laid the Atlantic cable was not in men, money, or enterprise, but in the soul of Cyrus W. Field. The power that crushed the rebellion was not in the armies and navies, but in the soul of Abraham Lincoln. And God is most and mightiest God when he comes in the forces of the soul—clad not in the whirlwind, earthquake, or fire, but in a form so bruised and broken that the soul streams through every rift.

All this we must learn; to this we must awaken: that the dominion, the power, and the glory are within, and that the noblest

thought of life is to let out these inner splendors. One Christmas Day I saw a group of children looking at their presents—pretty things. Ten minutes after they had left their toys—made things—and were in the back yard with broken bits of china making things; weaving earth's broken bits in the loom of the soul; touching outer things into life through the glory of the inner. And some day they will touch the broken pottery of life into a larger, diviner glory. And this passing from the outer to the inner glory, from the Sunshine-God to the Hero-God, is the great awakening of life.

Slowly comes the awakening. Some day in our childhood reading we come upon the little hero, in the person of a boy who has passed from the lowest to the highest; a boy who wrought with his soul, who endured, who toiled, who suffered. And a new kind of tear rolls down our cheek, the first divine tear. The divine ideal is growing upon us.

How different we felt when the army returned from war with faded uniform, tattered banners, and scarred faces from that hour when we cheered them going forth! There is a divinity in the old glory. There is a beauty in the scars that was not in the curves. And in our

hearts there is a new thrill, for they bring tidings not of a Sunshine-God but a Hero-God.

We listen with rapt attention and admiration to Paul in the Sanhedrin, but we feel a new power when the veteran stands before us in silence bearing the marks of the Lord Jesus upon him. It is the glory of God breaking through every scar.

This is the awaking of life from the sunshine that soothes to the hero that calls—from nature to men, from men to Christ. This is the thought at the heart of this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. It is the medley of an awakening soul. It is the cry of the human pierced by the presence of God. They are puzzled, they are dazed. He is a mystery. He runs counter to all their thoughts of life. They despise his weakness; they turn their faces from his deformity. By the canons of religion they take him for a victim of his own sin; he is "smitten of God and afflicted."

But through all this tumult of the outer—of thought, feeling, and prejudice—the revelation of the inner is bearing down upon their soul. A new thought of God, a new sense of beauty, a new vision of power, is creeping over their

soul. A new ideal, a new hero of life, is towering above them. This man is no dark mystery, he is the clear revelation of God; no deformity, but the highest and divinest beauty; no victim, but a hero, a master, a servant of God.

If about him we see the strange, dazed, disgusted, and angry human faces; if circumstances seem to overwhelm him, crush him; if he is silent when we listen for his voice, it is not because he is a victim but a master. Silent! yes, because he is looking out from the travail of his soul, down into the heart of man, up into the heart of God, and away into the future, satisfied already with his divine mastery.

The people hear a new voice; deep calls unto deep. It is the hero voice calling them to the heroic life, waking the divine in them. And they tremble upon the verge of a new life. But it is only a trembling at first—a contrition for sin that breaks forth into penitential song. They have seen the divine Hero, but, alas! he is crushed under the weight of their own undivine life. "He is wounded for our transgressions, he is bruised for our iniquities."

Yet this is the very point where life begins, as John Newton once sang:

"I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agony and blood,
Who fixed his languid eyes on me,
While at the cross I stood.

"Never to my latest breath
Shall I forget that look:
He seemed to charge me with his death,
Though not a word he spoke."

The same conscience that finally awakes to commend the divine Hero condemns me.

There is a time when a rift occurs in life; when the very ideal that has stirred the noblest in us looms up from another, impossible shore; when we awake to the startling fact that in life there are two worlds, not one: this world of sunshine and clouds below, and that world of moral and spiritual heroism above. This lower is very human, that higher is very divine. And we cannot shake off the conviction—nay, we would not shake off the conviction—that our true life belongs to that higher. But the two worlds drift on with impossible spaces lying between them.

True, there is an intermingling of light and life between these two. And there is the ascent of man, the upward struggle. Science interprets the upward trend, but the trend itself, the life struggle upward, never came through

science. The deeper meaning of life is not told in "the ascent of man," but in the descent of God; not in evolution, but in revelation; not from below, but from above—for life is born of ideals, and ideals are always above.

Between Job and this divine Hero there is an apparent similarity, yet a decided difference. In Job the hero climbs upward through doubt and darkness and suffering into the deeper mysteries of life. The inevitable falls upon him, and he turns it to the finer issues of his soul.

But here the Hero of God is not ascending, but descending. He is not a victim, but a master. It is not the inevitable, but a task to which he freely puts his soul. The travail of his soul is not for finer issues in himself, but in the souls of men. It is the dynamics of God entering into the life of men. And these men, penitent, broken, plastic before him, find the purpose of his life in their own life. "With his stripes we are healed." "The chastisements of our peace are upon him." They reach life through life. Nay, rather, life has come; the rift is crossed from above. The tides of heaven rush through them—a new world has entered and beats against the shores of the old.

The very potency of God has entered our life.

"He shall see his seed." His seed is in us. He shall find himself in us over and over again. We shall be repeaters—echoes of his life. For him to live will be men, and men and more men, and diviner, till far down the ages one shall cry, "Beloved, it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but—we shall be like him."

Through him we shall evolve the purpose of God in us; for "he shall divide the spoil with the strong." As we go forth from our Babylons, in the progress of the world, not at his car shall all the captives be led; not on his shoulders shall all the spoils be borne. He shall walk in the midst of an army of strong men, men who are conscious of such a fullness of life that they pour themselves out with a strange prodigality till the desert world blooms like a garden. One shall find the forces of nature playing their strange game about his feet, and shall lift them and make them take part in the larger game of human destiny. Another shall catch the music of the sea upon his sensitive soul and fling it to the world in poetic measure; while yet another, receiving into his heart the deep life of God, on fire with the redeeming passion of the Hero, shall rush earthward, crying, "This, this is the hour for souls."

THE CHRIST

Literature

"Oft the ancient forms
Will thrill, indeed, in carrying the young blood.
The wine skins, now and then a little warped,
Will crack even, as the new wine gurgles in:
Spare the old bottles!—spill not the new wine."

—*Mrs. Browning.*

"Then he remembered how that in the dream
One told him of the marvel of that stream,
Whose waters are a well of youth eterne.
And night and day its crystal heart doth yearn
To wed its youthhood with the sea's old age;
And faring on that bridal pilgrimage,
Its waters past the shining city are rolled,
And all the people drink and wax not old."

—*William Watson.*

LITERATURE

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill."—Matt. v, 17.

THE Bible realizes its ideal in history. Other literatures have failed in this respect. Plato spoke of a man that should come with the last word of truth. But that man never came to complete the philosophy of Plato. The artist idealized beauty into a god. But that god never became incarnate and visited the studio of the artist. Confucius bends all his theories toward what he calls "the superior man." But that man never came to verify the theories of Confucius.

But God seems to have entered into a league with the Hebrew Bible that sometime, somewhere, the great ideal of that book should be realized in a person. Now, it has been said, and most truly, that "personality is the Ultimate Reality," therefore the Bible reveals the Ultimate Reality; is a complete book. Other books are fragments. They begin with a person in local relations and pass on into words, powerless words. This book begins with words, the dreams and aspirations of the centuries,

and passes on into a person, who has universal relations, an almighty and all-loving Person, complete in him. "I am come not to destroy, but to fulfill." These Old Testament scriptures hold potentially God's great thought of life, and Jesus Christ came to fulfill it.

There are different ways of treating the past. One is to become its slave. What has been must be. What is written is written. As a prominent Jesuit has said of his Church, "Her methods may ebb and flow, her ritual change, her discipline undergo modifications, but her doctrines never." That is, the logic of one century will fix the boundaries of life for all centuries. This was the teaching of the scribes in the days of Christ. We are bound by the past —magnificent fetters, golden chains, wrought by Moses, the prophets, and the elders.

Christ met the old scripture not as a slave, but as a master—the highest form of mastery. He did not destroy—the real master never does; he redeems, he fulfills. He nourished his young life on those old books. You can't nourish your life on a book unless in some degree you master it. Swallowing a book whole never nourishes a man's life. You must learn how to husk a book to get at the corn. And

you must learn the difference in the value of the husk and the corn.

In these old scriptures there is much of the human husk enfolding the golden kernels of God. Jesus husked them of the letter, the form, the incidental, the detail, down to the living spirit. This gave the scriptures in his hands a living, present-day value and power. He did not appeal to them because they were old, because the elders had approved of them, but because they were a living power, a present-day force, something to command men that very hour.

And this takes us another step in his mastery of the scriptures. So sure is he that he is in line with the ancient Spirit of God that he dares put himself into the old scriptures, making them speak again with his own living voice: "Ye have heard how that it hath been said, . . . but I say unto you." Since then those old scriptures have throbbed with a new and deeper life.

Just as some great genius, some Shakespeare, takes a bit of ancient history and makes it live again by putting himself into it—making the characters live, move, and have their being in his life—so Jesus Christ put himself into the

old scriptures till they live, move, and have their being in him. The scribes had been spinning them out into details, rituals, commentaries, creeds. Christ entered them, making them live again with God's great idea of life. Old boundaries of interpretation were broken and expanded. The psalms were set to a larger music. The old epics were made to tell a divine story. And prophecy that had been waiting for ages in cheerless expectation felt itself live again with the Spirit of God. There are masters through whom we study the true, the beautiful, and the good. But there is but one supreme Master through whom we must read God's ancient story of life.

But there is a scripture more ancient than the Hebrew. That is nature. Long before this scripture was written that other scripture was being studied. There were nature stories before there were Bible stories. And how to master the nature stories through the Bible stories was and still is the problem, the great problem in literature.

There are men who instead of being slaves of the past, like the scribes, simply sweep it away, crying, "Away with tradition." They think themselves prophets, but they are not;

for a real prophet does not destroy, he fulfills. He strikes the flinty rocks of the past, the reservoirs of God, and they burst forth in living waters.

But the air just now is full of the cry, "Away with the past." Modern literature has been faithfully characterized as a "literature of revolt." "Away with old forms, old creeds, and old teachings; let us get out of the stuffy atmosphere of tradition." Out where? Into the open road of nature. This is the cry. Back from the ancient scripture to the more ancient scripture. Whitman says, "I see now the secret of making the best men: it is to grow in the open air and eat and sleep with the earth." Then the North American Indians, the Hottentots, and the South Sea Islanders ought to be the best men. They live in the open air and eat and sleep with the earth.

Grow best in the open air! Why that depends on what we are. If we are men with the prophecy of divinity within us it seems to me we shall grow best not under the tutelage of nature, but of the Divine Man.

This thought should decide us on those fine spring mornings when we are debating between the temple of the living Christ and the temple

of nature—whether true life, rich, noble, and strong, lies in the direction of

> "O to be lost in the wind and the sun,
> To be one with the wind and the stream!
> With never a care while the waters run,
> With never a thought in my dream,"

or in the direction of that other uncompromising heroic voice, calling down from the heights of manhood, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me;" whether we are not more in need of the Hero-God than the Nature-God.

But nature always leads the thoughtful man another step—from her dreamy soothing songs into her heartless, resistless laws; into fatalism, crushing fatalism.

Modern literature is "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of fatalism," is more than half pagan. It has not quite risen to the lofty spirit of the Bible, working out the grand epic of man's free spirit through the "shades of the prison house" unto the liberty of the sons of God.

And what we find in literature we find in life. The hardest thing to meet is just this sentiment of fatalism creeping over the spirit of life; referring everything to circumstances,

to law, to environment—not daring to stand for our own God-given free spirit.

When Christ came to carry out, to fulfill, God's thought of life he came to nature. But he approached nature as no man had ever done before. He loved her, but not as her slave, as her master. He must have loved nature, else he never would have seen so much in her. Her birds and brooks, her green hills and mysterious mountains, were the sweet, sympathetic companions of his life. But they never wooed him to their dreamy, listless songs, as they have so many other teachers in that Eastern land. They never bound him in the shackles of their fatalistic laws. No fatalism ever blighted his words. His was the high and holy language of the free and buoyant spirit.

Other men have sung nature's songs and told nature's stories. But Jesus Christ came with the master spirit and wooed nature to his own story of life. He did not sing her songs, she sang his. He did not tell her stories, she told his. He did not take up the thought of the lily's life, but he made the lily take up the thought of his life. He did not undertake to tell the story of the sparrow's life, but he wove the sparrow into his own great story of life.

He did not lead us back and down into the long, mysterious life-and-death story of the kernel of wheat, but he wove it into his own great life-and-death story. And ever since it has been repeating the story of a life beyond the grave.

His story of life is larger and diviner than nature's story. Hers is mortal, his immortal. Hers is of bondage, his of freedom. Her story runs backward, his runs forward. Hers is of the earth, earthy, his is of the sons and daughters of God.

But there is another scripture deeper and older than nature. It is our life, our inmost being. It is deeper and older because the lineaments of God are in it—the divine possibility; that prophecy in men written before the foundations of the world, that Jesus Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfill; that prophecy buried away in the heart of the publican and sinner, a prophecy that Jesus alone could see, could read, could fulfill, and so hovered about the soul: such a prophecy in us all to be fulfilled, if ever, through Jesus Christ.

One thing stands in the way of that fulfillment—not law, not circumstance, but sin. Some writers tell us sin is only a morbid condi-

tion of the conscience induced by tradition; and some that it is only an imperfection of our nature that we shall in time outgrow. But the deep heart of man has never accepted these definitions of sin. Our deepest intuitions pass beyond tradition and nature, and lodge the difficulty in the will, in the central life.

But how to manage the will of man is the whole problem of life. And so sin becomes the final objective point of all human effort. It keeps the world busy. If sin could be eliminated from the world the most of us would be out of work.

This problem of sin, this conflict with sin, was the principal business of the Hebrew nation. All that great structure of sacrifices and ceremonies, of statutes and literatures, of obligations and oaths, built up through the centuries into a mighty, complex, and elaborate piece of machinery, was all designed to meet the fact of sin.

Now, that whole great structure stood for life to the Jew. It said, Do this and live. And Jesus came not to destroy, but to fulfill.

But imagine the shock to the Hebrew world when this man dares to reduce this whole structure, hoary with years, to a simple story of

family life—of a son who goes astray, who comes to himself, who returns home and casts himself into the forgiving arms of a father.

If simplicity be the highest mark of mastery —and is it not?—then Jesus Christ must be the Master in literature. He probes the heart of all scriptures and reduces them to a simple story plucked from the family life of man.

And is this indeed the real story of life? So Jesus Christ tells us; and he puts himself into the story, and that made it real. He did not explain it, but he lived it. His atonement was a life. He lived it. And when he had lived it out to the last red drop of blood, lived it out to the right-hand glory of God, then by faith was the story transferred in terms of a new life to the soul of man. Since then the world's best literature has been struggling to write this story the Master lived, this story of life that lies deeper than tradition or nature, deeper than environment or heredity—the epic of man's free spirit, the story of sin, forgiveness, and sonship.

THE CHRIST

History

"For this is Love's nobility—
Not to scatter bread and gold,
Goods and raiment bought and sold:
But to hold fast his simple sense,
And speak the speech of innocence,
And with hand, and body, and blood,
To make his bosom counsel good.
For he that feedeth men serveth few;
He serves all who dares be true."

—*Emerson.*

"And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer."—*John.*

HISTORY

"But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. . . . Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. . . . Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."—Matt. iv, 4, 7, 10.

THERE are at least two sides to the temptation of Jesus. First, there was the temptation itself, the testing and proving that he was the Son of God. Then there were the utterances wrung from him in the hour of his trial, the enunciation of those principles through which he achieved his mission. They are quotations from an old scripture, words touched into a new and larger meaning by the lips of Jesus. "Man shall not live by bread alone," and "thou shalt not tempt God," but "thou shalt serve him." There is a distinct development of thought here, leading us into the full meaning of the life of Christ as the Master of the world's history.

Jesus did not make bread, because he came to make men, and men are not made of bread. This thought that man does not live by bread alone grew out of an experience of God's people. God had been making some men, and he

hadn't used much bread in the process. He had made them not in gardens, but in the desert; not among the vineyards, but under the shadow of somber mountains. They were led not by the wheat fields of the future, but by a fire at night and a cloud by day. He had made them of words, knowledge, visions, commandments, and discipline, sifting them in through the soul as the sun sifts through the chinks of a cavern till it is all glorious within.

This is the most ancient lesson of God, that man does not live by bread, but by words—the lesson Abraham had to learn. One day the question of bread arose—he must have bread. Down to Egypt he goes, coins his soul in the mint of iniquity, and buys bread. But he learns the lesson and returns again to his hill country, there to nourish his higher nature, as God whispers through the oak, speaks in the sacrifice, and looks down through the steady, strong stars. Another day, when he and Lot stood out to divide the land, it was a bread question again. Lot took the bread, the fertile plains; and this time Abraham was content with the rocks, the stars, and God.

This is the age-long lesson of God. We start with bread, then we must have clothes, and

then houses; but to-morrow we must have finer bread, better clothes, pockets in them, and something to put in the pockets. Every day creates new hungers, and the old is lost in the appeal of the new.

There is the hunger of the mind for truth, ascending to all heights and descending to all depths. Turning back upon history, digging into self—all questions of bread overrun in this great mind hunger, freezing at the poles, burning at the equator, suffering, toiling, dying for the truth.

There is another hunger following upon this, the hunger of the conscience for new duties; for no sooner does a new truth possess a man than a new world beckons to him. Paul with the old Pharisaic truth, narrow and keen, cuts a swath of destruction in the name of duty, haling men and women to prison. But when the new truth came, behold, a new duty. He is just as eager now to throw open the prison doors of life, crying, "The love of Christ constraineth me."

And what is this lesson but this: the infinite capacity for life in man, the capacity for God; "all the words" that proceed out of the mouth of God. And it was this infinite capacity Jesus

came to recognize in man. This he insisted upon; this thought shaped his ministry—the infinite capacity of life. Every gospel door opened out. One day at Nazareth he took up the scripture of Isaiah: "Gospel for the poor, deliverance for captives, sight for the blind, liberty for the bruised." Every gateway swinging outward and life pouring forth in an ever-swelling stream.

And one day around this very question of bread he works out again the old thought that man does not live by bread. He had just performed the miracle of the loaves. Then from the bread he leads up to words, great living words, and from words to himself, till the crowd melted away and only a few of his followers were left; then turning to them with "And will ye also go?" while Peter—Peter always bigger inside than out, always with more ideas than he knew what to do with, with more life than he could manage—Peter rose to the occasion, crying, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Standing out, then, with this infinite capacity for life, half real, half ideal, the question follows, What shall we do with it? This life, this infinite capacity for life, what direction

shall it take? This brings us naturally to the second scripture, and the first thought is to exploit this life, this capacity, for ourself. Climb to the pinnacle and cast thyself down; startle the world; tempt God, test him, develop him, according to thy will.

But this is to reverse the order of life. "Thou shalt not tempt God." God is not here to be tempted; we are. God is not here to be tested; we are. God is not here to be developed, but we are. We need to be tested, tried, developed, drawn up into God's will, for that is the moralization of life.

Let no man think the world a machine to be run by him. The world is a school. God is the master, and we are in training for moral ends. It is a graded school, and we pass from grade to grade, through temptation, trials, development. Every day we break from the little circles into the larger; pass more and more into the orbit of God's will, more and more into the moral quality.

It is not a self-willed dash from the pinnacle. Manhood is not in such an act. Strength and mastery are not there. It is rather a climbing to the pinnacle, a measuring up and up, till we reach the top; then not to hurl ourselves down,

but to stand, to balance ourself there, according to the moral structure of the universe. This is mastery, this strength, this service.

> "For he that feedeth men serveth few;
> He serves all who dares be true."

Our own Lincoln in the last century achieved this. When they rushed upon him demanding his policy, the miracle by which he should save the nation, he remained calm, and for policies gave principles. When they were hurling themselves from their pinnacles in frantic policies of the hour he was searching deeper for the will of God. Groping his way toward the moral trend, he got his feet upon the granite, and there stood when his friends fell like ninepins about him. But it was no blind fatalism; rather, he had reached the pinnacle of an ethicised soul. He was alive, alert, aquiver with the sensitiveness of God. And when the morning rays of hope at last broke it was the mountain peak of his soul that was first bathed in sunlight.

The dash from the pinnacle is self-willed. It may project itself in theories, policies, schemes —commercial, social, political, or otherwise. These may be enforced by the stubborn, strenuous will, the set teeth, the fixed eye, the clinched

fist, but the stars fight against us in their course. The ministry of angels does not lie along this way. For what is the ministry of angels but the ministry of the higher nature. The thoughts and feelings that weave themselves into the soul that is under the training of God. The manna that nourishes the will that is under the tutelage of the Almighty. The larger views ever flowing in from above, lifting life through the downward currents as a ship is borne upward through the locks by the constant inflowing water, till we reach at last the mountain heights of a moral life, illumined of God, and look out upon the world with the eyes of God.

And this is the scene of the third temptation. We are already in the presence of the third scripture, "Thou shalt worship God, and him only shalt thou serve."

There is but one divine service. The tempter proposed that Jesus buy the world, own it. But, quite aside from the morale of the purchase, owning the world is not serving God. Owning the Philippines is not serving God. Owning a dollar is not serving God. There is but one divine service. Redeeming things, bringing back the lost values, the divine worth of things—this is both worship and service.

Gold is lost in the mountains till it is redeemed, and then it must be redeemed again into the service of God and man; for when we get it we are not sure what to do with it. To-day we make of it the golden calf; to-morrow we fresco the sky, shutting out the sun; the next day we adorn ourselves, and, behold, we are in fetters. By and by we shall get the New Jerusalem idea, that gold is not for gods, nor sky, nor fetters, but for streets, for pavements for the sons of God to walk home on.

Art is lost in the discords of the world until the redeemers come—the poets, painters, and musicians. And it, too, must be redeemed again ere it come into the service of God and man. For to-day her ministry is mixed, perverse, perverted, and perverting. It is playing to the pit of sense instead of the heights of the soul. Yet we believe it is slowly working its way into more spiritual hands, hands of the immortal harpers that serve God day and night; into that service which Tolstoi claims is the real mission of art—the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

And science, too, is lost in the labyrinth of the universe and must be redeemed—twice redeemed: first from nature, and then from doubt

to faith, from matter to spirit, from the making of bread to the making of man.

But there is a redemption deeper and more vital, a redemption about which all these play but a secondary part—the redemption of the sons of God from the depths of our humanity. This is the redemption of Jesus; the heart of all redemption.

There is an ancient scripture to the effect that a fact may be established by two witnesses, and there are two witnesses to the fact that we are the sons of Adam. One is within, the other without. Our environment forever bears witness with our inherited weakness that we are children of the first Adam. But Jesus came to establish another fact, an overwhelming fact, mighty and victorious—that we are the sons of God, sons of the spirit, sons of power, sons of liberty. And this has been established by two witnesses, one within and one above. "The Spirit of God beareth witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God." This is at once the foundation and goal of the world's progress.

"What if the o'erturned altar
Lays bare the ancient lie?
What if the dreams and legends
Of the world's childhood die?

"Have ye not his witness
Within yourselves always,
His hand that on the keys of life
For bliss or bale he lays?"

The divine current of history, then, according to the scripture of the temptation and under the mastery of Christ, flows ever toward the development of man's infinite capacity—flows not wantonly and willfully, but is seized and bent, trained and disciplined, unto the will of God and the moralization of the world.

Nor is this the full significance of the world's progress. The movement is more than moral. It is spiritual. It is redemptive. It is a series of new births, of new worlds redeemed from the old.

The victory of Christ in the wilderness is the age-long victory of Christ in his world.

"The world's old;
But the old world waits the time to be renewed:
Toward which, new hearts in individual growth
Must quicken, and increase to multitude
In new dynasties of the race of men—
Developed whence, shall grow spontaneously
New churches, new economies, new laws
Admitting freedom, new societies
Excluding falsehood. He shall make all new."

THE CHRIST

Life

"Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once;
And He that might the vantage best have took
Found out the remedy."—*Shakespeare.*

"And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,
And in the second men are slaying beasts,
And on the third are warriors, perfect men,
And on the fourth are men with growing wings,
And over all one Statue."—*Tennyson.*

LIFE

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."—Rom. viii, 2.

EVERY philosophy discusses the freedom of man. The Bible transfers the question from discussion to life. It says if a man is not free he ought to be; for the whole divine purpose, process, and progress of the world is for the emancipation of man. "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Freedom, then, is not a mere thought, but an experience; and it is this experience, not in the world at large, but in the individual soul, that Paul covers by the words, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." It is an experience that begins with a struggle.

The word "struggle" has reached scientific

eminence in the world's history. It is conceded that the earth is one great battlefield; that our life has been largely chiseled and shaped in the fierce conflict of human existence.

Even the most superficial life has its struggles. The tramp, so lax and loose and carefree, has his struggles, faint and feeble though they may be. The devotee of society, whose only anxiety is to be recognized, finds even this a struggle, an exposure to the slings and arrows of pique and pride and poverty.

Now, in all this struggle of life there is a certain divine tendency. The struggle is carried in from the surface toward the center; from the battlefield to the council chamber; from the council chamber to the soul of one man.

Jacob begins his battle with Esau, carries it over to Laban, and finally discovers that the only battle worthy of a man is the battle with himself. Paul began with an external foe, the Christian Church, but found the conflict thrown back upon the battlefield of his own soul—in among the hidden but mighty forces of life's armies that had been gathering through centuries of ancestral development. Habits and prejudices, tempers and passions, ideas and

ideals, ambitions and aspirations, flesh and spirit, were waging an unending warfare across the field of life.

This inner struggle seems at first, like the great world struggle, to be a strange, wild medley of discordant forces. But Paul finally reduces them to the law of God and the law of sin; the law of life and the law of death.

Our main interest, however, centers in the battle itself. We ask, How goes the battle? and Paul reports it against him. The members are warring against the head. Rebellious standards are lifted here and there, the integrity of life is assailed, the empire of the soul is in a state of anarchy. And all this means that the battle is being carried to the death; that this is the disintegration, demoralization, degeneration of the soul; that this is hell; that life is being lost, dripping away as a piece of ice melts in the sun; returning to dust as a stone pulverized in the elements; decomposing and dying like a flower plucked from the vital stem. The stars are fighting against him in their course. Life's wholeness he cannot achieve. He declares, "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." As though a chemist with all the elements at hand

were trying to make an acorn. Mix the parts as he will the acorn eludes him. The spiritual band of life he cannot find.

Now Paul could have made a Pharisee, for he had the prescription; or a Sadducee, for he knew the formula. But this new life lies deeper than all prescriptions and all formulas, or even any heroic struggle of the soul of man, and he breaks down with the cry, "O wretched man that I am!"—breaking forth, however, the next moment into the exultant cry, "I thank God through Jesus Christ."

What lies in between this strange despair and wonderful elation, this death and life? To answer this question is to find the open secret of life.

In the making of life, or anything that has life, there are always two factors: first, the analysis of the material, the taking to pieces, and then the constructive genius. This is true whether it be applied to a church, a prayer meeting, a book, a picture, or a human life.

God does not convert a soul—make a new life—simply by law; for law analyzes, law takes us down by showing us up. But after the law has reduced us to nothing, then comes in the constructive genius of God and makes

us into something. After the death of the old he gives us the life of the new.

What, then, is this constructive genius of God, this giving life to things? The answer is more simple than we dream; for to make a thing live we have only to give it life; and if *we* make it live we must give it *our* life. Men have lives to give in different directions: this one to colors till they speak; that one to marble till it throbs; and this again to thought and it breaks into singing. If you want a church to live, to live again, you only need to give it life. Put in the life, and, behold, it is alive. This is the simple fact and the great truth. It is the truth of all truth. When God would make a world live, would give it life, he simply gave it his life.

This is the supreme fact about God, that he is a spontaneous God; and all the world about us of life and power is throbbing with his spontaneity. He is a generous God filling the world with the wealth of his being; a giving God who spares not himself in the giving. And this spontaneous, generous, giving God is the supreme fact in life. When, in Jesus Christ, he walked through the haunts of our humanity it was only to give, and give, and give again.

Can we then in such a presence live a narrow, mean, and sordid life? Is there not a certain divine compulsion upon us—a new commandment coming not from without but breaking forth from our own heart? This something we have discovered in God: is it not the noblest and best we ever recognized in men?—this free, frank, unstudied, spontaneous generosity of God? How does it affect us when we find it in men? If your child obeys, you say that is right, it is what he ought to do. But if of his own free will he works out some generous, self-denying, self-sacrificing deed of kindness, it goes to your heart and you catch him in your arms. Paul said, "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die." The righteous man whose life runs like a clock is of great service to the community, but no one is going to die for him. But the good man, the generous, self-denying, self-sacrificing, unstudied, spontaneous soul, he will find men to die for him. In his presence souls will leap into heroic grandeur. He is the leader. And what the studied, exacting law could not do God sent his Son—freely, spontaneously, self-denying, self-sacrificing—down through all the mystery of

that ministry, down into life, through fate and sorrow, sin and death, till he reached this man Paul in the hell of his despair. And the very coming awakened something in the man, some slumbering divinity of the soul, some redeeming grace of being, some remnant of spontaneous life, something that had never been reached before, something that could have been reached in no other way. And the divinity answers back to the divine, grace to grace, life to life, and his soul breaks heavenward in the cry, "I thank God through Jesus Christ."

And this man's life, that had been tortuously studied, exacting, and specific in its purpose, suddenly becomes spontaneous, divinely abandoned, swinging out from a new center with a new and an ennobling power. We find him one moment with a pocket full of documents, charts, plans, and specifications of what he shall do and how he shall do it. The next moment the light flashes upon him, the Christ is before him, and soul rushes forward with the cry, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He asks for no specifications, charts, or plans. He is ready to take sealed orders from this Christ, to "go where he wants him to go, and do what he wants him to do." He has

found the real hero of the soul, and that is enough. He has found the centrality of life. For life is central; indeed, it is just this centrality that makes life life at all. All the struggle, dismemberment, and oncreeping death and yawning hell was just the losing of the soul's centrality, her unity, her integrity.

The plant is a living thing, not because so many elements enter into it, but because at the heart stands some central force commanding and swinging the elements with the rhythm of the universe. Nor is life life because so many things enter into it, rich, powerful, and choice, but because there is a central power commanding the things as they come, shaping them there according to its rhythmic genius, giving to them of its charm, its power, its glory till every element swings with a free hand from the center; till duty becomes love, and sorrow glory, and death life, and life Christ, and Christ God. The value of things depends upon the divine centrality.

Then life becomes still more deeply central. Christ came into the world for the Father. He came in the Father's name; came to do the Father's business; came to make everything spell one word, Fatherhood. What

men had called a lily he made spell fatherhood. What men had called a sparrow he made spell fatherhood. What men had called "fisherman's luck" he made spell fatherhood. He aimed to bring all the discordant forces of earth under the charm of that word; to bring all into one family; to restore the spiritual bond of the world.

And what he does in the world he also does in the soul, entering it in the name of the Father. He marshals its discordant tempers and traits, inherited and acquired, into one family, making the lion and the lamb lie down together in the soul. He does not convert lion into lamb, nor lamb into lion, but brings all under one higher, restraining power by adding the centripetal force that gives liberty.

But Christ comes into the soul not only in the Father's name, but with the Father's touch. It is the old creative touch of God, the springtime spirit that makes old things live again; that redeems that wonderful dream of life through which the old life began the strange struggle for the new.

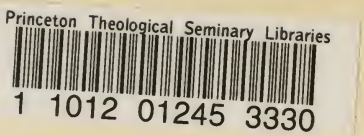
In some dark corner of the cellar a bulb awaits the spring planting. The gardener has forgotten it. But the bulb by instinct feels that

the spring sun is outside and it is making a faint, sickly struggle for life. It is just a yearning, pale and dreamlike, till suddenly the gardener bethinks himself and hastens to bring the bulb and plant it in the earth. Then the sun begins to give its great generous self to the bulb. It gives, and gives, and gives, till the bulb itself begins to give—gives back color, leaf, bud, and blossom.

So the spirit of life in Christ Jesus streams in upon the soul till the whole being is quickened into life and begins to give, and give, and give. And what was only a strange, wild struggle, a fruitless dream of life, has become a divine reality, the glorious liberty of living.

'Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
'Life is but an empty dream!'
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

"Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul."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